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*TWO SINNERS.*¹

BY MRS. DAVID G. RITCHIE.

CHAPTER X.

THEY were sitting at lunch in the long, narrow dining-room at No. 2 Brown Street. Kiddie was seated by the fire in his basket. Jackson brought in a letter and handed it to Lady Dorothy.

'From George!' said Lady Dorothy, as soon as she had put up her glasses.

Maud went on eating without making any reply.

Her Aunt Dorothy tore open the letter, spread it out, and began to read.

'Great news,' she said, putting down the letter. 'But I knew it would come to that. So, there's both of you off. Only Ursula left—and 'pon my word, I was beginning to think that *you* would follow in her steps and remain an old maid. But I was wrong: you were waiting for Major Kames, my dear—the most sensible thing you could do. A very charming man, and with the wealth he has got he is a sugar-plum. Now George is going to marry Stella. Do you hear, Maud?' The good lady took up the letter again to read such important family news to her niece.

'Don't read it aloud,' said Maud. 'It's not right, not proper.' She would have risen from the table if she had dared.

But Lady Dorothy did not hear, and if she had heard she would have thought the remark most absurd.

'Did you guess it was coming?' she asked.

'Yes,' said Maud.

'Well, here goes,' she began, reading aloud in a jaunty voice that was mellowed by satisfaction.

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'MY DEAR AUNT DOROTHY,—I am letting you know before anyone else because I owe it to you that I ever met her—I speak of Stella Monckton—to whom I am just engaged. I know only too well that I am only a poor man' ('quite true,' interposed Lady Dorothy. 'I think he has two hundred a year of his own, not a penny more, and I suppose his salary is something absurd')—a poor man, but with the encouragement and help of a girl like Stella any man would be able to realise the very best that is in him. That realisation she puts before all others for the man she loves—even if it means the sacrifice of her own career. She is the most unselfish woman I have ever met. Think what a stimulus she will be to my work—to all that I hold most worth living for! She is more than all I had ever hoped for. I must catch the five o'clock train to Brighton, to-day, but shall run in and see you and my future sister-in-law, if I can, between three and four.

'Your affectionate nephew,
GEORGE BROUGHTON.'

'Dear, good, sentimental fellow,' added Lady Dorothy. 'I don't quite understand what he means by Stella's career—do you, Maud? Stella's career?'

Maud had placed her elbow on the table, and was resting her forehead on her hand.

'I don't know,' said Maud, trying to speak distinctly.

'Well, the boy is very much in love,' said Lady Dorothy, folding the letter. 'He's not a catch by any means, but if any girl wants a really good man—there he is—if he only would behave with more kindness to Kiddie. I can't think why he ill-treats him; it's not like his general character; but perhaps scientific people are like that. I don't like it. I must stay in and see him when he comes. After all, it doesn't much matter putting off those calls—and we got plenty of fresh air this morning! Dear me!'

Lady Dorothy got up from the table, carrying the letter with her.

'What will poor Ursula say to you two girls going off and leaving her alone? However, such things can't be helped! Some people must be left behind.' Lady Dorothy was so much excited by the news that she did not notice Maud's extraordinary silence.

Maud walked behind her upstairs, carrying Kiddie in her arms to her aunt's bedroom.

'You can see George even if he comes before I am up, and you can send him up to me. It will be delightful news to tell Major Kames when he comes to dinner! I suppose George didn't know

when he was here yesterday afternoon. Perhaps he had only just written to Stella, and didn't get her answer till last night, or the first thing this morning! Dear me, I wish somebody would take pity on Ursula! Occasionally women of her age marry—but not often; and though the dearest woman in the world, she's not what one would call a likely person—in that respect.' Lady Dorothy began preparing herself to lie down.

'I really shan't let Kiddie see George. The poor angel will not have forgotten the way he was treated yesterday, and will be in fits if he sees the unkind-y-kind.' Lady Dorothy turned round and stared up at her niece, who was acting as maid to her at the moment.

'Shall I ask Eugenie to take him out for a walk between half-past three and half-past four?'

'Perhaps you had better,' said Maud.

'Eugenie is always grumpy when I ask her—people are so selfish about dogs! However, ring the bell, dear. I'll make the venture—I'll brave the dragon.'

Maud rang the bell, and after waiting for a moment till the maid appeared, she went out of the room and closed the door softly, and went down into the drawing-room. She looked out of the window.

It was one of those piercingly cold February days that forbid any thought of the coming spring, grey pavement, grey roadway, grey sky topping the grey houses opposite—the chilliness of the air could be seen. She went to the same gilt mirror into which she had looked on the previous afternoon, and which had reflected back an image of brilliant graceful womanhood. What did it reflect now? She went close up to it and gazed at a white face.

She went upstairs to her room. She dressed for going out and put on her furs. Then she rang the bell and told the maid that if Dr. Broughton called her ladyship was to be told at once. She explained that she was going out herself for a walk, and was not sure when she would be in.

The very sting of the cold wind outside was a physical relief to the girl. Also it is easier to control any emotion when one is walking fast. She scarcely noticed where she was going except that she knew she was walking in the Park, and pacing along westwards. The people she met seemed to her, in her present mood, more liked dressed figures than human beings. They all walked as if untouched by any keen emotion; even though one here or there moved with an unusual haste, it was in order to save time, not because of any driving force behind—moral or spiritual. Had

all these people forgotten that they were the victims of a strange, inevitable destiny? Didn't they know that they were without their consent forced into this world, loving or hating, and crying out for a God who makes no answer? She left the park behind her and went along streets—street after street—and at last she fancied that her steps were followed by the steps of another. A sudden fear came over her, interrupting her thoughts. She was not accustomed to walk alone in London. Where was she? The streets were long, and the houses the homes of the mediocrity—neither rich nor poor; there were not many people passing up or down them. She looked up the road to see if she could see a policeman, or a taxi-stand. She could see nothing; the road was empty. She walked faster and turned—because she feared to turn back and face what might turn out to be a persistent shadow—into a side road. The dismal houses looked down upon her without a sign of life.

Suddenly she saw a spire; a few yards off was a red-brick church. The gates were open, the door was open. Beside it was a large notice announcing a 'Mission,' and giving the hours of the services.

She pushed the inner door, and found herself inside a large bare church. She would look for the sacristan, and ask him the way to the nearest taxi-stand.

It was dusky inside, and the lights hanging before the altar were conspicuous bright objects. At the farthest end of the aisle the vestry door stood open, and two men talked within. She could see that one was a priest and the other a sacristan. The priest was tall and thin, and angular in his cassock, the sacristan was short and stout. Maud could see that as she moved aside into a chapel, and sat down on a chair to wait till they had finished their conversation.

In a few moments she heard the priest coming towards her. She looked up. He had entered the chapel. He was middle-aged, his light hair was mixed with grey, his features were pronounced, almost severe, and his pale grey eyes had a strange look in them, a look of penetrative humour and a look of fanaticism. It was a rare combination. It almost alarmed Maud. She rose hastily, as if to escape.

'Did you want to speak to me?' he asked.

'I am so ashamed,' began Maud; 'I only came here because I had lost my way, and couldn't find a taxi.'

Wearing an old shabby cassock, the man she addressed was yet a great gentleman in appearance, in manner, in every detail. Maud found it difficult to remove her eyes from his face.

Psychologists tell us that whole schemes of thought create themselves below the margin of our consciousness, and often lie there dormant until something happens to lift them to the surface, and we are surprised at our new and unexpected view of things.

Maud had been unaware that she had any craving to unburden her thoughts to anyone, but as she stood there in the twilight of that February afternoon in the quiet refuge of that chapel there came upon her a great longing to put her case before an impartial critic whom she would never meet again. What brought that inner want to consciousness was the personality of this man. Had he been uncouth in appearance or jocose in manner, had he worn an air of spiritual unction, she would have left that chapel with her secret undisclosed. As it was, at his bidding she seated herself again, and began staring hard at her muff, and doubting how she should begin.

He sat down on a chair in front of her, and leaned over the back so as to face her.

'I will get you a taxi later on,' he said.

'Thanks so much,' said Maud. 'Thank you——' but she found no further words, and yet she waited for them to come.

'You have something to say about yourself?' he suggested. He spoke in such an impersonal manner and with such consummate ease, that Maud felt that she must always have intended speaking to him about herself, only that the opportunity had not arisen before.

'No one will interrupt us,' he said, 'and I have time. It is the business of my life to listen as well as to talk. Are you troubled with religious difficulties?'

'I have no religious difficulties,' said Maud, 'because I have no religion.'

CHAPTER XI.

HERE Maud looked very straight into the face opposite to her. She was getting accustomed to the dimness of the chapel, lit only by lamps hanging before the altar close beside them, and a light in the aisle by the vestry door. She thought she saw in that face opposite to her the physical traces of a life of nervous strain. It was as if the sculptor had moulded features of an intellectual type, features of a man in the full strength of his age, and then had scored the forehead and the lips with a chisel. But the pale grey eyes were

undimmed and ardent. Five minutes ago she had never seen this man, he was an utter stranger; yet she had made an admission to him such as one makes rarely to an intimate friend. Because he looked a notable person, was she taking him for more than he was worth? Suppose that in spite of the distinction of his face he was a mere sacerdotalist, satisfied with the husk of Catholicism, and only capable of reiterating commonplaces.

'There is something else you want to talk about?' he suggested. He did not show a flicker of surprise at her dismissal of religion.

'There are things——' Maud began; 'but why should I trouble you?'

'You are going to take some step you are doubtful about,' he suggested, 'and would like to talk it over?' He spoke as if it were the most natural thing in the world that she, a perfect stranger to him, should confide in him—it seemed to Maud at that moment the most natural thing. Indeed, it seemed as if he had sprung into existence for that purpose. There he was, waiting. She lowered her eyes now, and spoke down at the muff on her lap. She was determined to speak without any emotion. She would put her question in the most impersonal way she could.

'It is a little discouraging to an ordinary profane person like myself,' she began, 'to find that really good men have so little discrimination. For instance, why does a man, who has all the world to choose from—a man of real mental ability and of moral refinement—why does he insist on marrying a—pair of turquoise earrings?'

She raised her eyes in a flash, and met the grey ones that were looking at her.

'It is not a conundrum,' she added, leaning forward and looking directly at him.

There was the very slightest contraction of his closed lips, but no smile; the smile lay behind them.

'No man has all the world to choose from,' he said.

Maud listened almost without drawing her breath.

'If the man is all you say, how many women will he have met who are his match?'

That was true. How many? Had she ever herself met, among the many girls she knew, Broughton's match? Was she herself his match?

'You must remember,' he went on, 'that Nature cares nothing for the individual. Nature cares only for the continuation of the race. If men and women in the flower of their age went about the

world able to see each other clearly and critically, would they, as they do now, rush madly into bondage for the rest of their lives? They would weigh and hesitate—until youth was past. So Nature has wisely, for her own purposes, made them blind. Marcus Aurelius marries Faustina, Octavia marries Antony.'

'Then you don't think "falling in love" is sacred?' she said, as if summing up his words into one sentence. She leaned forward and spoke slowly. 'Knowing that love is blind, you would not blame a woman if she married a man she didn't love?'

This was the question of her life. He was to decide. He was to judge dispassionately, from the point of a man who is standing back from the stage and looking on life as a spectator—a spectator who is impartial, yet profoundly serious.

'“Falling in love” and love—are two different matters,’ he said.

Maud tried to look at him without flinching. She noticed, without moving her own eyes from his, minute details about this man that had hitherto escaped her. She observed the length of his hands, the gauntness of his wrists and elbows. She observed that his lips were moulded with a certain flatness and thickness almost to the corners, that he had a scar upon his chin, that his ears were small, and that his grizzled hair curled at his ears. The absolute simplicity of his dress, the straight lines of his cassock and collar band, only added to his look of austere dignity.

'Mere “falling in love” often ends in “falling out of love.” Love in the fuller sense, what the Greeks called charity, is necessary in every relation of life.'

Maud made no reply. Her eyelids quivered a little.

'Love in the sense of charity—is the only solution to the problem of life; we have tried easier methods and they have failed. By love I don't mean sentiment or admiration for what is charming—I mean something that is “stronger than death.” A man who has the leisure to sit by his fireside surrounded by pictures and books and selected companions will often, after he has had a reasonably good dinner, say—nay protest—that “Love” is better than the Law and the Prophets, and wiser than any Philosophy. So it is; but it is incalculably harder—as he will find out if you turn that man out of his sheltered library, face to face with the coarser forms of Humanity, and ask him to show his “love” to them. Suppose you make him attend to some irritable paralytic, or saddle him with a drunken wife, or make him responsible for underlings who are envious and suspicious, and then ask him whether he finds “love” as easy as he

thought.' He paused for a moment and then said almost abruptly, 'I don't blame a woman for marrying a man whom she does not love, if she is strong enough and tender enough to behave to him as if she did love him.' His mouth relaxed with a smile that would at any other time have been irresistible to Maud; just now she could not smile in return—she felt inexpressibly pained. The tears started to her eyes, the corners of her mouth dropped miserably, and she bent her head. After a moment's silence he added very gravely, 'The woman you speak of is marrying—for some *reason*,' and he laid a stress on the last word.

'Of course,' said Maud, trying to control her emotion. She raised her head, and sat with drooping eyelids like a child being catechised.

'Is the motive of the marriage respect,' he asked, 'or the desire for a home?'

Maud did not answer.

'Wealth?' he suggested.

She bent her head slightly.

'The man you are about to marry,' he began—he laid no emphasis on the 'you,' the word dropped into its place without effort—'The man you are about to marry has something to offer you that you prize. Very well. Is there anything you can give him in return for this that he will value highly?'

'I don't know,' said Maud.

'Does he care about sympathy, affection?'

Maud did not deny it. Everything was going against her. This man was making her feel that she was morally feeble, and she wanted to be told that she was really strong—only unfortunate.

'And you can't give him sympathy or affection—is that it? You are not strong enough, or tender enough, to behave as if you loved him?'

Maud shook her head—and allowed a tear to trickle down her cheek and fall upon her muff.

'In that case you mustn't marry him.'

Maud rose from her chair.

'I knew you'd say that,' she murmured.

He rose from his chair too, and stood looking down at her:

'Whatever faults there are on either side—whatever regrets there may be, or repinings, a man and a woman must at least start their married life with an honest recognition that they have given "hostages to fortune." Do you understand?'

She understood only too well. The interview was over, the judgment had gone against her, and she felt that there could be no appeal—that was the hardship of it.

‘You don’t know how difficult it will be,’ she said impulsively.

‘Life itself is difficult,’ he said. ‘It has never been better described than as no more and no less than the brief glance thrown by a drowning man who lifts his head for a moment above the waves around him, and stretches out his hands towards sights and sounds, the meaning of which he has no time to understand, and then sinks and is gone. Realise the solemnity of this, and you will not go far wrong. I am speaking to you,’ he added, ‘in your own language, not in the language of religion.’

Maud moved her lips silently, as she gazed up at him.

He looked down intently at her, and laid his hand on her shoulder.

‘In words that you and I can both understand, let me urge you to look on life as very short and very precious.’

‘I will try,’ she said.

Then he moved away from her, bidding her wait for a moment while he fetched his hat from the vestry. Surely she had not been in the church more than five or ten minutes, and in that short time all that had been happening for many, many weeks was cancelled.

She walked slowly down the aisle toward the door. She could hear voices from the vestry—his voice and the voice of the sacristan; she could not hear what they said.

At the door she waited and turned back. He was coming towards her. She pushed open the door and stood outside. The afternoon was already getting dark and the wind was, if possible, colder than it had been before. Maud shivered and drew her furs more closely round her.

‘We can get a taxi in the next street,’ he said. As they walked along together it seemed to Maud as if neither time nor circumstance had had anything to do with the relationship with this man. He had always intended to answer her question, and she had always intended to ask it. A few paces brought them to a street which her companion turned down. It led to a big thoroughfare, and Maud could see in the gathering twilight at the corner a row of taxicabs. She could see a motor-omnibus passing crowded with City men, she could see the traffic and rush of London, she could hear the noise loud and fitful.

Before she could collect her thoughts, before she could clearly see her position, before she had time to realise what lay before her, she would be speeding away in one of the taxis, carrying her marching orders with her—orders given her by a stranger, some one who had sprung from nowhere, but whom she recognised at once as, of necessity, the arbiter of her fate.

How she rebelled against the consequences of his judgment, rebelled and yet saw no escape from them; besides, she had said 'I will try.' He hailed a taxi, and Maud saw it shunt and then slide towards them, lessening the short distance with an almost malignant rapidity.

How would she be able to go through with all that lay before her when she was alone, weak, and unsupported by the force of this man's presence? He helped her into the taxi and shut the door upon her.

'What address?' he asked.

Maud gave it, and she could hear him repeat it to the chauffeur.

Then she leaned her head at the window in a sudden haste.

'I don't even know your name,' she called, for she felt like a child who has just discovered that he has lost sight of his home, and that he is lost.

'Wait a minute,' he said to the driver, and feeling in his pockets he produced a leathern card-case. He took out a card and handed it in at the window to Maud.

'Good-bye,' he said, and stood back on the pavement.

Maud sat leaning forward, the card in her hand. She gazed out at the tall cloaked figure. What was his life like? What was the secret of it? What suffering had been his?—what joys? She would never see him again. He had come across her for a moment and had gone, and yet the whole future direction of her life had been decided by his judgment—the order of his life, of which she knew nothing, ruled hers.

He was out of sight, and she sank back upon the cushions disconsolate.

The card! It was in her hand. She sat up, peered over it, reading it by the dim lamplight. There was the name and address. How strange! It seemed as if she heard a familiar echo of Ursula's voice from the distance.

He was Father Fitzherbert of the Community of St. Paul.

And all the time he had never so much as pronounced the word 'God.'

CHAPTER XII.

LADY DOROTHY was very much excited by the events of the afternoon—that is to say, her talk with George Broughton. She was a little indignant that Maud had not stayed at home to meet George. Maud ought not to have gone out—on such an occasion; and if she had gone out, she ought not to have walked so far that she was obliged to rest for half an hour in a church before driving home.

‘It’s too late for tea—and I don’t want any,’ said Maud.

‘You shouldn’t wander about like a lost lamb,’ said Lady Dorothy. ‘It isn’t a proper or a pleasant thing to do—and, of course, you are too tired to want any tea now; but do listen while I tell you. They are to be married in July!’

Lady Dorothy stared hard at her niece, but failed to attract her eyes. ‘Now, Maud, why can’t you and Lionel fix on a date for yourselves? What do you say to being married on the same day as George and Stella?’

Lady Dorothy looked still harder at her niece, across the bridge of her nose—a habit she had when she was thinking of ‘ways and means.’

Maud had gone to the fire, and was gazing down at the point of her toe as she placed it on the fender.

Life did seem very short and very precious—for the moment—when Fitzherbert was walking beside her; but now in the commonplace London drawing-room, with Aunt Dorothy talking to her, her own personal hopes and fears came crowding back upon her with sudden intensity, and life seemed very long—and full of sordid necessities.

‘What do you think?’ demanded her Aunt Dorothy. ‘Isn’t it a good idea?’

‘Please don’t even suggest such a thing,’ said Maud, in a tone of cold surprise.

‘But we must consider expense,’ said Lady Dorothy. ‘Sentiment is all very well, Maud, but both you and Stella must be married from here; and you know—well, my dear, you must know—that since your uncle’s death I have had to get along as best I could.’

‘I know, I know,’ said Maud. ‘All I mean, dear Aunt Dorothy, is that Stella’s wedding should be considered first—there is no hurry about mine!’

'It ought to be the other way about—a hurry for you—and no hurry for Stella.'

'I haven't thought of the day yet,' said Maud gloomily, 'not even of the month—or—' she added in a low voice, 'the year. Anyhow, my wedding will cost nothing. Major Kames has no relatives—that I have ever heard of; and as to mine—no one matters but you, Aunt Dorothy. An absolutely quiet wedding is all I could possibly tolerate.'

'I wish you were not so eccentric, Maud,' said Lady Dorothy; 'you must consult Lionel's wishes in the matter. A perfectly quiet wedding is all right when people are in mourning, but it is not a good beginning under ordinary circumstances—it is unsociable and very unsuitable when you are marrying a wealthy man. I don't know how I can afford two separate weddings this summer. I've been going through the matter roughly—very roughly—just now, merely to get an estimate of what it will cost—Ursula can't help. You see, there is a trousseau for each of you.'

'Stella is sure to want an orthodox wedding, Aunt Dorothy—so that as things stand now,' said Maud coldly, 'I have two alternatives before me—either to be married quietly—or not to be married at all. I'm not sure that it wouldn't be better to put off my wedding—indefinitely! What do you think?'

This was not what Lady Dorothy meant. She gasped. 'What do you mean?' she demanded.

'Nothing in the world would induce me to go halves in Stella's wedding,' said Maud. 'An ordinary single wedding seems to me absurd enough; but a double one—dear Aunt Dorothy, do talk of something else.'

'How can I talk of something else? Here you and Stella get engaged within a fortnight of each other—and are going to be married—and you expect me not to talk about it. You are not reasonable; we must talk it over with Lionel, who, I am quite sure, will be willing to discuss the most important step in his life—even if you won't—in fact,' she added, 'he may have decided views.'

'He will have to choose between a quiet wedding or no wedding. He may prefer the latter,' said Maud.

'Your walk hasn't done you any good,' said Lady Dorothy. 'Wandering alone about the London streets is not healthy or nice for a girl.'

'I'm sorry,' said Maud. 'Perhaps when I have warmed my feet my brains will work better—until they are warm. I can't help

thinking that it is pleasant to know that when I die I shan't have to arrange my own funeral.'

'Many people *do* arrange their own funeral beforehand,' said Lady Dorothy, 'and enjoy doing it—though not people of your age.'

'Then I am glad to think that nobody can arrange what they are going to do in the next world—Aunt Dorothy,' said Maud, hitching up the skirt of her dress slightly and smoothing it out over her knees.

'Of course not,' said Lady Dorothy. 'A Divine Providence has arranged that—or will arrange it—but I am not asking you to discuss the next world with me.'

'That's quite true—you have me there,' said Maud. 'I'm cross and stupid—I can't think just now, Aunt Dorothy.'

Lady Dorothy gave an inarticulate grunt, and looked her niece all over. Then she looked at the clock.

'Dinner in an hour's time,' she said. 'I asked Lionel to be here at half-past seven.' As she spoke she rose from her chair and, stooping down, gathered Kiddie in her arms. 'I'm going,' she said, adding—'and so the darling, Kidikins, the poor ickle Kidikins, has got to spend his evening all alone-y-one. Oh, the wicked people—oh, the heartless people, to leave the angel angel all alone-y-one.'

If Lady Dorothy had had the dispensing of the lives of her nieces, she would have ordered a miracle and got Ursula married to some respectable parson, and she would have disposed of Stella, either to George or some one else. Maud she would have retained in her own service. Although she found Maud at times a little exasperating, Maud was her favourite. Maud's engagement might not have been so pleasing to her, had it been to anyone less fascinating than Major Kames. Major Kames was just the nephew-in-law that Lady Dorothy would have chosen to have—had her imagination been vivid enough to anticipate his personality.

Lady Dorothy felt as if her entourage had suddenly been enriched: life was more amusing now that Lionel Kames visited No. 2 Brown Street. Lady Dorothy went through the process of dressing with an interest in it that she had not felt for years. The only drawback to the evening's enjoyment was the necessity of leaving Kiddie at home. She was sure that, in course of time, Kiddie would learn to appreciate Lionel and love him, and the few gathering clouds that darkened her darling's life would be dispersed in the near future, when he would become a welcome guest along with his mistress at Orpenden. Orpenden would be a charming change of air for

Kiddie. How keenly he would enjoy the grounds! What a delightful man Lionel was—and so considerate! There he was already in the drawing-room when Lady Dorothy came down. He was not merely punctual to the moment, he was in front of the clock, and had arrived five minutes before the time. He was there, large, prosperous, and genial.

'Maud is late,' said Lady Dorothy, as she looked with attentive scrutiny at her future nephew-in-law. Everything about him pleased her; she felt warmed, secure and stimulated by his presence; the misgiving that sometimes crept into her heart in spite of Kiddie, in spite of her self-assertion—the misgiving that she was, after all, just an old, lonely woman, had no place even at the back of her thoughts when she was talking to Lionel Kames. Somehow, mysteriously, he shed a rose-colour over herself and her drawing-room. Lady Dorothy did not notice any lack of spirituality in him. She did not look for 'spirituality.' Her brother General Monckton had called himself an 'agnostic'; Lady Dorothy called herself a 'Christian,' and neither position had any relation to 'spirituality.' Lady Dorothy directed her coachman to drive to church in exactly the same spirit as she would have directed him to Bond Street for shops, or to Buxton for baths.

'Lionel,' she said, 'another family event! My nephew George, whom you saw yesterday, is just engaged to Stella. There, isn't that a piece of news?'

Kames's face looked down at her attentively. 'Lucky beggar,' he said, after a brief pause—and his face looked enigmatic.

'So's she,' said Lady Dorothy.

'Of course,' said Kames—'so's she!' His face still looked enigmatic.

'There's no doubt that Stella is a very fine girl,' said Lady Dorothy, 'though very different from Maud.'

'You cannot compare them,' said Kames, still occupied with his own thoughts.

'No, you can't compare them—they are both splendid girls. And—' added Lady Dorothy, in a perfunctory voice, the voice of one who is saying what is proper about the family—'and Ursula is, as everybody knows, a saint.'

Kames raised his head a little.

'It 'ld be a dull world without saints,' he said, and laughed.

'Oh, do you think so?' said Lady Dorothy, a little sharply, for she was thinking of Ursula.

'I do,' said Kames. 'They're so surprisin'. Sinners you can haul in by the dozen with a penny hook and a bit of coloured thread; but saints, there's no knowing how to catch 'em, or how to keep 'em when they are caught.'

'I don't want to catch them,' said Lady Dorothy. Kames stared down at her narrowly, and the corners of his mouth relaxed into a slow smile. She was half nettled, half fascinated, by his look. He was perhaps just a little—well, not quite right from the point of view of his antecedents, but apart from that he was charming, he had a personality that pleased her and made her forget she was old. She almost jumped when the drawing-room door opened and Maud came in.

'Maud!' she called, 'you are five whole minutes late; it's unpardonable. I only forgive you because I have been telling Lionel about Stella's engagement.'

Maud's face, which was pale when she entered, flushed. 'I am very sorry, Aunt Dorothy,' she said, and then she held out her hand to Kames and smiled, but she did not look at him.

'I should hope you are sorry,' said Lady Dorothy. 'Lionel, give me your arm.'

'I am your obedient servant,' said Kames. He had dropped Maud's hand, but his eyes were still on her when he offered his arm to Lady Dorothy.

'Maud isn't generally guilty of bad manners,' Lady Dorothy explained.

'I'm sure of it,' said Kames.

'Though young people nowadays usually have no manners.'

'Bad form,' said Kames, 'isn't what it used to be. It used to be anything inelegant, now it's t'other way round.'

'"Change and decay in all around I see,"' quoted Lady Dorothy. 'So I suppose we must endure it.'

Lady Dorothy had arranged that Kiddie should be brought into the dining-room after they were seated at table. She hoped that if he was brought in swiftly and deposited on his own mat in front of his own dinner, he might forgive, or overlook, the presence of Major Kames. Then, after the warmth of food had permeated his being, he would insensibly become accustomed to the intrusion and resent it less.

This optimistic view did not prove to be a correct one. Although Kiddie was brought swiftly in, and put down by the plate of food by the fire, he perceived instantly that there was an obnoxious

and unaccustomed presence at the sacred and exclusive table of his mistress. He glanced at Major Kames out of the corners of his eyes, and fell into a paroxysm of rage, standing stiffly before his still more sacred and exclusive plate. He glared haughtily at the minced chicken and early spinach, and dared Major Kames to come and touch it; he dared Major Kames to remain seated, dared Major Kames to speak, he dared him even to breathe.

'Conversation is impossible,' said Maud, glancing everywhere but at Kames. What sort of language was he using under his breath? She had a faint conception of it.

Suddenly Kiddie relaxed his limbs, became silent, and fell upon his food.

'The darling!' murmured Lady Dorothy. 'Isn't he wonderful with Lionel, Maud? You will be the best of friends in no time, and once a friend always a friend—with Kiddie. Don't you think fidelity is the greatest of all virtues? You know the Monckton motto—"Faithful to the death." Whatever vices we may have, we are true to our word. It's Kiddie's motto too.'

Maud still avoided the brown watchful eyes of the man who sat opposite her.

Fitzherbert's words, 'if you are strong enough and tender enough,' wounded her to the very soul. For Maud knew she could be neither strong nor tender. If—ah, if Lionel had been a man like Fitzherbert, or like George Broughton, she could—she thought she could—have been both tender and strong.

If she had felt distress at the contrast between George Broughton and Lionel, she felt still more distress at the contrast between Lionel and Fitzherbert.

Once during that dinner she shot a swift look at the man to whom she—a Monckton—had pledged her word. Could she, by a superhuman effort, pretend to love him? Would it be possible? Kames, still watchful, caught that look and tried, by sheer force of will, to retain it. She wrenched herself away, and sat confused and miserable.

All that evening passed like an uneasy dream. The theatre with its thronged galleries, its hot and oppressive atmosphere, the crowded faces, Lady Dorothy talkative and amused, the play itself strangely meaningless and unnecessary, the characters shadows with a human shape.

Nothing was to Maud distinct and real but the silent struggle between Lionel and herself. It had come to that—he knew it and

was gathering up his forces for the attack. A man came into the box and began talking. It was that youthful 'cheeper' of music-hall phrases whom Stella called 'Jumper.' Maud could see that he was attracted by Kames. Kames stood conspicuous, a notable figure. He looked like a man who controlled the circumstances of life, he suggested 'money,' and young Broughton was impressed. Maud could hear the youth criticising the drama. Maud could hear Lionel's voice.

'What do you mean by realism?' she heard him demand.

The youth's reply was that he meant what everybody else meant.

'Everybody don't mean the same,' said Kames's voice rapidly; in his tone there was a suppressed irritation that was new to Maud.

'Who are you trying to identify?' asked Lady Dorothy, bending her high-bridged nose nearer to Maud.

'I'm only looking at the confusion,' said Maud, for her ears were straining to catch the voices behind her that had withdrawn themselves a little.

'A great man,' she heard Kames say in a lowered voice to escape the ears of Lady Dorothy—'a great man may mean by realism what he sees, or thinks he sees, in the gutter, or in the church, or on the hill-top, but'—and here Maud only just caught the last words—'but, knowing human nature as I do, when I hear a lousy-looking brute, who smells of the paint-box or of the lamp, slobbering praise of realism, I know, even though he don't know himself, that what he means is: real uninterrupted dirt; the cant name for it is "Art for Art's sake."'

Maud shuddered and found herself repeating almost as one repeats the words of some old prayer barely remembered, 'I want you to think of life as very short and very precious.' Oh, what did it all mean, this conflict, this struggle, this grasping at things that are here, there, and are gone—this sounding swift tumultuous coming and going of human life?

The play was all over, the curtain was being lowered for the last time, and the audience were pressing to the doors. Maud found herself out in the fresh air among a pushing crowd; then came the swift gliding along midnight streets, and they were home again. Now what was going to happen? Most mercifully, most amazingly, Kames refused to come in. He stood just inside the hall, hat in hand, saying good-night.

'So you really won't—really, positively?' said Lady Dorothy, trying to conceal her relief; for was not her own Kiddie waiting

for her upstairs? She could hear the distant sound of his darling screams, and dear, dear Lionel might excite the angel too, too much for his little nerv-y-nerves.

Maud had slipped past her Aunt Dorothy, and stood, looking white and guilty, out of Lionel's reach. She had not yet said good-night.

'Maud!' said Lady Dorothy. 'He absolutely refuses to come in,' and she moved towards the staircase. Kames was still standing at the door.

'Maud,' he said bluntly. 'Wait! I want to ask you a question.'

'Of course, of course,' called out Lady Dorothy, clutching at her cloak and impedimenta, and beginning to mount the stairs. 'Good-bye, Lionel; such a delightful evening—indeed, most delightful,' she called back, as she ran nimbly up—nimbly for her age; but then she was stimulated to extra exertion by the thought that the 'young couple' wanted her out of the way.

Jackson had disappeared, and Maud stood there, her face getting more and more strained.

What was the question Lionel was going to ask her? Was it the date of their marriage? If so, she would be forced to speak out.

'Don't look so startled,' said Kames.

'Do I look startled?' said Maud.

'You know that you look startled, and are startled,' he said. Standing there in the full glare of the light, he looked as if he was about to add some abrupt exclamation, but he suppressed himself, and said after a moment's pause—

'I've promised Lady Dorothy to come to her At Home to-morrow and sing. Do you wish me to come?'

'I thought you said you'd promised,' said Maud, trembling a little.

'I have promised!'

There was a long pause which became intolerable to Maud.

'You will find it appallingly dull,' she said. 'Old pals of Aunt Dorothy, people who endure Kiddie. You will suffer a martyrdom.'

But she saw that the party was not what he was thinking of; he scarcely followed the words she was saying. He made a step towards her and moved his lips.

'I want to apologise,' he said, 'for a remark that I made to you yesterday—outside the drawing-room—a remark about Broughton. Will you try and forgive me?'

Forgive him, when all the time she was needing forgiveness herself—for her weakness, and her lack of honour towards a man who, after all, had done her no injury. Even if he was inferior to George Broughton, to Fitzherbert, she had no right to treat him with duplicity.

'It is I who need forgiveness,' said Maud, without moving. He glanced at her swiftly and searchingly.

'That may or may not be, but it is easier for me to forgive you. In this short time I have learned to forgive you even for giving me great pain. I cannot conceive myself refusing you forgiveness for anything except——' Here he paused as if unable to pronounce the words.

Maud knew what he meant: except—failure to keep her promise!

In proportion as his passion had grown, his pride had fallen. It had come to this—that her lack of sympathy, her unflattering criticism of him, counted to him as nothing. That was folly. In that case, did he really deserve so much consideration from her?

This thought plunged her into a revulsion of self-pity. Had he not given her a sort of right to keep him, and yet to be unkind to him if she liked? Oh, no, no, that was a dishonourable thought. And yet——

'You could forgive anything,' she said, not daring to meet his eyes, but speaking low and looking on the floor, for she was ignoring his real meaning—'You could forgive anything except—finding me religious or mystical; that would be to you—unforgivably absurd and repellent?'

'By God!' he burst out. 'It would not. I make no pretence to religion myself—I wouldn't lie to you on such a matter; but you are free to think what you like.'

'Thanks,' said Maud.

'I love you so much,' said Kames, in a low voice, 'that it seems to me—standing here and looking at you as I do now—that there are no thoughts of yours that could be repulsive to me—no thoughts, true or false, that I could not tolerate, or even express myself, at your command!'

He was making it more and more difficult for her to retrace her steps. Underneath this seeming humility lurked the tyranny of a despot. His love was like a serpent. He meant to wind himself round her soul till he suffocated it.

'Why do you think you can change your nature?' she asked, with raised eyebrows of incredulity.

'You don't know all that my nature is,' he said, 'nor do you fully know yours. There are moments when I am tempted to think that did we really know ourselves we should die with laughing—or go mad.'

Maud's cheeks from turning pale turned red, and her pulses beat. There was something in this man that frightened her, repelled her, attracted her. She said to herself over and over again that his personality was too strong for her, that face to face with him she was not her true self—and this half truth, half falsehood, she iterated to herself fiercely as a verbal justification of her weakness.

'Don't keep me; let me go, please,' she said, pulling her hand from his. 'Forgive me; good-night,' and she ran away from him to the stairs. She ran up them, not daring to look back. He did not call her, the hall was silent behind her.

How much longer was she to go on torturing herself, and him?

She heard the hall-door close as she reached the landing. She stood, her hand on her beating heart, listening. She thought she could hear him call out something to his chauffeur, and then the car whizzed away down the wet, slushy street. Mysticism! The spiritual life! What right had she to speak of them—mere words that a parrot could repeat if it had heard Father Fitzherbert use them?

Mysticism! Why, the curse of her whole life was that the world we see and touch, and the love of that world, was her dominant passion.

'Here's a letter for you,' said Lady Dorothy, who was sipping a cup of cocoa with Kiddie on her knees.

Maud took it and opened it. It was from Ursula. It was all about Stella's engagement—a letter full of sympathy and sisterly affection. House-hunting was, of course, at an end, and the Brighton lodgings were taken on till the end of July. Ursula said nothing about what would happen to herself after that!

Maud looked up from the letter and sat thinking. Would Aunt Dorothy be inconsolable when the time came to tell her that Lionel must cease to come to No. 2 Brown Street—that the engagement was broken off?—would she be inconsolable, or would she be much annoyed, or would she be a little contemptuous?

'Anyhow, Ursula will be happy—at last!' said Maud bitterly to herself. 'Poor, poor Ursula!'

'My plan,' called out Lady Dorothy—'my plan to-morrow is to send out Kiddie for a walk in the morning, and then he will not

mind so much being imprisoned all the afternoon in my room. I wish I could have him in the drawing-room, but I think it would scarcely do—it will be Lionel's first Sunday afternoon in this house, and he's going to sing for me. People who perform, however charming they are, seem so extraordinarily sensitive about any *other* noise going on at the same time in the room—and I would not for the world annoy that good-natured man. Another Sunday, and Kiddie and he will be firm friends, and then—we shall see—what we shall see !'

Kiddie gazed out into the room from his mistress's lap, and appeared to listen and understand, though he made no response.

'I have never come across anyone more obliging than Lionel Kames,' continued Lady Dorothy. 'He will make an ideal husband, and he admires you so much that he will allow himself to be ruled by you—lucky girl !'

Maud looked away from her aunt towards the fire.

'A man is only ruled by his wife if she is selfish, or silly, or a little coarse ; then he allows her to tread upon him and is faithful. Women are just the same. If a woman marries a really good man, she is fretful and discontented, full of extremes and silly ambitions of her own ; if he's a brute, she spends her life looking after him, considering him, loving him, praying for him !'

'Maud !' said Lady Dorothy, 'you haven't yet got over your quite unnecessary, and very strange, walk this afternoon.'

'I can't help what I see around me, Aunt Dorothy,' said Maud. 'I didn't invent human nature ; I only observe it.'

'Then you observe it wrongly, my dear,' said Lady Dorothy. 'Now I've got something to tell you that will cheer you up: Lionel is giving a dinner the week after next at Orpenden, for us to meet some of his friends in the neighbourhood. He has asked me to act as hostess, and to-morrow he will consult you and me as to the day that will suit us best. I shall wear the Monckton collarette, the only bit of respectability we have left to us. I must get it out of the bank.'

(To be continued.)

HODSON, OF HODSON'S HORSE.—RECOLLECTIONS,
1857-1858.

BY COL. SIR EDWARD T. THACKERAY, V.C., K.C.B.

JUNE 8, being the date of the battle of Badle-ka-Serai, fought fifty-seven years ago, is commemorated annually by a dinner given by a few survivors of the siege of Delhi, who are rapidly dwindling in number. At the dinner in London on the above date this year, which was presided over by Field-Marshal Earl Roberts, K.G., &c., there were nineteen officers present.

It may be remembered that the battle mentioned above took place near to Badle-ka-Serai, a small village situated on the Grand Trunk Road about six miles from Delhi. The rebel sepoys were assembled in great force, and occupied the village, which they had fortified and defended with thirty guns, with the intention of opposing the force under the command of General Sir Henry Barnard, which was marching on Delhi. But it is not proposed in this short memoir to give a detailed account of this fiercely fought action, which resulted in the total defeat and rout of the rebels, the capture of their guns, and the occupation on the same day of the historic ridge which overlooked the city of the Great Mogul. The action is only mentioned on account of it being the first time during the Indian Mutiny that the famous soldier, Hodson, of Hodson's Horse, had the opportunity of displaying his brilliant qualities as a leader of irregular horse, and as an officer of the Intelligence Department unsurpassed in the annals of history.

It was from information brought by Lieutenant Hodson that General Barnard heard that the enemy intended to oppose his march to Delhi.

Hodson, who had previously done good service for the Commander-in-Chief by opening communication with Meerut, had been sent to reconnoitre the road. He reported that the rebels were in force at Badle-ka-Serai, about half-way between Alipore and Delhi. Orders were accordingly issued for an advance at midnight on June 7, 1857. Fifty Jheend horsemen under Lieutenant Hodson accompanied three squadrons of the 9th Lancers under Brigadier Hope Grant with the object of turning the enemy's flank.

Lieutenant William Hodson, of the 1st Company's Fusiliers, was a man of rare energy of character. On the outbreak of the Mutiny

at Meerut he volunteered to carry dispatches there and to bring back the much-needed information as to the state of Wilson's Brigade. General Anson, the Commander-in-Chief, discerning his many fine qualities, offered him a place in the Department of the Quartermaster-General, and especially charged him with the intelligence branch of its duties, in prosecution of which he was to raise a body of a hundred horse and fifty foot. This order was subsequently extended to the raising of an entire new regiment of irregular horse.

Hodson was appointed to the Punjab Guide Corps in 1847, and among those who rejoiced in his appointment was Captain Herbert Edwardes, who had lately been transferred to Lawrence's staff. Writing to his mother in the autumn of 1847, Edwardes thus speaks of his brother officer :

'Young Hodson has been appointed to do duty with our Punjab Guide Corps, commanded by Lieutenant Lumsden. The duties of a Commandant and Adjutant of Guides are at once important and delightful. . . . In short it is a roving commission, and to a man of spirit and ability one of the finest appointments imaginable. I think Hodson will do it justice. He is one of the finest young fellows I know, and a thorough soldier at his heart.'

After the cruel fate which overtook Mr. Vans Agnew and his military colleague Lieutenant Anderson, at Multan, Hodson writes in a letter to his father from Lahore on April 26, 1848 :

'I mentioned to you that Sir F. Currie's plan of sending me to assist Agnew at Multan had been altered, and that Anderson had gone with him in my stead. At the time I was disposed to be disappointed ; but we never know what is for our good. In this case I should doubtless have incurred the horrible fate of poor Anderson and Agnew. Both these fellows have been barbarously murdered by the Multan troops.'

Hodson's services in the campaign of 1848 were gratefully acknowledged by Brigadier Wheeler in his dispatch of October 15, 1848 :

'Lieutenant W. S. Hodson, with his detachment of the Corps of Guides, has done most excellent service, and by his daring boldness and that of his men gained the admiration of all.'

He writes about this time :

'I have had loads of work'; and adds, 'what with soldiering, providing supplies for the force, and all the multifarious duties

which come on the shoulders of a "political" out here, I am quite well, and the weather is lovely, so work is easy comparatively, and an active life like this is, as you know, my particular weakness.'

A few days after he wrote :

'I have had also to feed an army of 3,000 odd fighting men, 2,000 odd horses, and 14,000 to 15,000 camp followers. Also to take care of and work my Guides, to point out the haunts, and obtain information of the strength of the "enemy" and give him over to the tender mercies of fire and sword.'

During the whole period of the siege of Delhi, from June 8 to September 20, 1857, Hodson watched every movement of the enemy with the utmost vigilance. Everyone relied upon him. Tall, fair, and handsome, with light blue eyes, a magnificent rider and swordsman, he won the admiration of all who served there.

A few days after the action at Khasgunje, which was fought by the force under General Seaton then marching from Delhi to Cawnpore, Hodson volunteered to ride across the country occupied by the enemy to carry dispatches to the Commander-in-Chief, Lord Clyde. He rode this distance of about fifty-five miles through a district where not a single European had been seen since the beginning of the Mutiny at Meerut in May. On his return he learnt that some of his men whom he had left in a village had been attacked by a large force and killed. Hodson, however, succeeded in skirting the village unobserved. The writer saw and spoke to him as he came into camp on his return after safely delivering the dispatches. He looked fresh and smart as if he had come back from an ordinary morning ride. The men cheered him as he walked through the camp.

Detachments from Hodson's regiment took part in many of the fiercely fought actions around Delhi during the siege, including the severe fight of July 14. A few days before this the enemy had been foiled by Hodson in an attempt to cut off our communication with the Punjab. On the day of the assault—September 14—Hodson, with his newly raised regiment, was with Sir Hope Grant's brigade, which suffered severely in loss of men and officers by the fire from the walls of the city.

One of the most notable achievements of Hodson was performed at Rohtak during the siege of Delhi. On the morning of August 17

he marched to Rohtak, the chief civil station of the district. On reaching Rohtak, he writes to his wife :

' We found the Mussulman portion of the people and a crowd of Irregulars drawn up on the walls, while a considerable party were on a mound outside. I had ridden forward with Captain Wise and a few orderlies to see how the land lay, when the rascals fired and ran towards us. I sent word for my cavalry to come up, and rode slowly back myself in order to tempt them out, which had partly the desired effect, and as soon as my leading troop came up we dashed at them and drove them helter-skelter into the town, killing all we overtook. We then encamped in what was the Kutcherry compound, and had a grateful rest and a quiet night. The representatives of the better disposed part of the population came out to me, and amply provided us with supplies for both man and beast.'

But a yet more trying ordeal awaited Hodson and his little force. About 7 A.M. on the 18th he learnt that Babar Khan had brought into Rohtak a body of 300 Rangar horsemen, who a few minutes later were seen dashing out from the town towards Hodson's camp, followed by some 900 footmen, armed with swords and matchlocks. A small party of Jhind horsemen, coming up at that moment to reinforce Hodson, were in time to receive and check the brunt of the rebel onset.

Meanwhile Hodson, who had kept his horses saddled, lost no time in turning out his men. With twenty of these he charged the assailants and drove them back in disorder towards the town. To quote his own dispatch :

' Directly the whole detachment was ready and formed up, I sent what little baggage we had to the rear under a sufficient escort, and prepared for a further attack. I formed the main body on the road in three lines, the Guides in front, sending a troop out to the right front under Lieutenant Wise, and one to the left under Lieutenant McDowell, ready to take the enemy in the flank should they again charge up the roads (of which there are three leading from the town to our position). These movements were covered by skirmishers and by the excellent fire of the Jhind horsemen armed with matchlocks, whom I desired to dismount and drive back by their fire any part of the enemy who might come from under shelter of the buildings. This service they performed exceedingly well and most cheerfully.'

Finding that his ammunition was nearly exhausted, and seeing

that nothing could be gained by fighting against walls lined with matchlockmen, he 'determined to draw them out into the open country, behind our position, and endeavour to bring on a fight there.'

This perilous manœuvre, on which Hodson may be said to have staked his fame as a great military leader, was carried out with perfect success. It was a manœuvre which would have tasked the steadiness of tried veterans, and two-thirds of his men were little better than raw recruits. But Hodson knew that his untrained soldiers were ready to go wherever the Guides and his English officers might lead.

'Everything,' he says in his dispatch, 'turned out as I had anticipated. My men withdrew slowly and deliberately by alternate troops (the troop nearest the enemy by alternate ranks) along the line of the Behar road, by which we had reached Rohtak, our left extending towards the main road to Delhi. The Jhind horsemen protected our right, and a troop of my own regiment the left. The enemy moved out the instant that we withdrew, following us in great numbers, yelling and shouting and keeping up a heavy fire of matchlocks.

'Their horsemen were principally on their right, and a party galloping up the main road threatened our left flank. I continued to retire until we got into open and comparatively dry ground, and then turned and charged the mass, who had come to within from 150 to 200 yards of us. The Guides, who were nearest to them, were upon them in an instant, closely followed by, and soon intermixed with, my own men.

'The enemy stood for a few seconds, turned, and then were driven back in utter confusion to the very walls of the town, it being with some difficulty that the officers could prevent their men entering the town with the fugitives. Fifty of the enemy, all horsemen, were killed on the ground, and many must have been wounded.

'Nothing,' he adds, 'could be better than the conduct of all concerned. The Guide Cavalry behaved with their usual dashing gallantry, and their example was well emulated by the men of my new regiment, now for the first time engaged with the enemy. They not only remained under fire unflinchingly, but retired before the enemy steadily and deliberately, and when ordered turned and charged home boldly.'

Meanwhile a rumour had reached General Wilson's camp that Hodson had been driven by superior numbers to take refuge

within the walls of the jail at Rohtak, but the consequent alarm was not shared by the Civil Commissioner, Harvey Greathed. Charles Thomason,¹ on the 19th, was proceeding on duty along the Grand Trunk Road, 'very down,' as he described it, at the sad news of the supposed disaster at Rohtak, when, 'looking up, I saw some native cavalry coming down the road towards me. I was not at all sure who they were, but went on my way until we met,' when to his great delight he recognised Hodson and McDowell chatting sociably together at the head of Hodson's Horse.

In this short memoir, which only relates to Hodson's valuable services as an officer of the Intelligence Department and as a leader of Irregular Cavalry, it would not be fitting and it is not proposed to enter into the subject of the detraction from Hodson's splendid career which has been made in some quarters on account of his action in shooting the Princes after their capture at Humayun's tomb on September 22. The writer can only affirm that he never heard a contrary opinion expressed at the time by those who had served during the siege, but that the punishment of these royal Princes who had instigated the cold-blooded massacre of the Christians at Delhi in the previous month of May was justified under the circumstances, and that if Hodson had not acted as he did the prisoners would have been rescued by the mob and would have escaped. There was no breach of faith on Hodson's part, as he steadily refused to give any promise to the Princes that their lives would be spared.

After the capture of Delhi a detachment of Hodson's Horse commanded by Lieutenant Hugh Gough, afterwards General Sir Hugh Gough, G.C.B., V.C., consisting of one hundred and eighty men, formed part of the columns which left Delhi on September 24 to proceed to Cawnpore; and the squadron did excellent service in the fight near Bulandshuhur on September 28 and at the battle near Agra on October 9.

The writer of this short memoir, being a young subaltern of Engineers at the time of the siege of Delhi, and several years junior to Hodson, and being constantly on duty in the trenches, had not a great many opportunities at that time of seeing Hodson, who was scouring the district in his capacity of Intelligence Officer, thus obtaining that knowledge of the enemy's movements which proved of such value to General Wilson.

But occasionally Hodson would ride to the Observatory on the

¹ The late Major-General C. Thomason, R.E.

Ridge or to the 'General's Mound' and would explain to us what he had succeeded in learning; and on some of these occasions I remember talking to him and admiring his cheerfulness under difficulties, and his wonderful energy and resourcefulness—particularly after the actions of Badle-ka-Serai and the several combats of June 19 and 20.

Being attached to the column under General Seaton which marched to Lucknow in December 1857, after the capture of Lucknow I had several opportunities of seeing and talking to Hodson, who commanded his regiment with the column. On December 12 this column came up with the rebels, who had taken up a strong position near Khasgunje, and the day after the action at that place Hodson pursued them for several miles, leaving 500 dead on the field and capturing their guns.

General Seaton, who rode himself in their pursuit, gave permission to the Engineer officers who were attached to his column to accompany Hodson, among them being Major Alex. Taylor, afterwards General Sir A. Taylor, G.C.B., in commemoration of whose great services a statue is now being erected at Delhi.

Hodson was killed at the capture of Lucknow in March 1858.

On the 11th, the Artillery and Naval Brigade, under Sir William Peel, had battered and breached the Begum Kotee with three 68-pounders. This was then assaulted and carried by our troops, the enemy losing about 500 men.

It was after this assault that Hodson, of Hodson's Horse, lost his life. He was the finest leader of irregular cavalry in India, and his loss was greatly mourned by everyone in the force. We had arrived at Bankes's house just as the party going to attack the Begum Palace had started, and fell in with them. Previous to this he had said in a laughing manner to his friend Brigadier Napier (afterwards Lord Napier of Magdala), who was directing the attack, 'I am come to take care of you; you have no business to go to work without me to look after you.' The place had been taken before he was wounded. When the soldiers were searching for concealed sepoys in the courtyard and buildings adjoining, he said to his orderly, 'I wonder if any of the rascals are in there.'

He turned the angle of the passage, looked into a dark room which was full of sepoys; a shot was fired from inside. He staggered back some paces and then fell. A party of Highlanders, hearing who had been hit, rushed into the room and bayoneted every man there. He was shot through the right side of the chest, the ball

entering in front and going out behind. He was taken in a dooly to Bankes's house, where his wound was looked to and dressed. At daylight the following morning he was much better, his hands being warm and his pulse good. The officer in medical charge of the regiment hoped that if the bleeding, which had ceased, did not return he might recover. At 10 A.M., however, bleeding came on again profusely, and he rapidly became worse. He sent for General Napier, to whom he gave directions about his property, and sent messages to his wife.

After this he sank rapidly, though he remained sensible, and was able to speak until he became too weak, and at twenty-five minutes past one he died. He was buried that evening by the Rev. W. Clarke, the Commander-in-Chief and his Staff being present. Thus, on March 12, 1858, in his thirty-seventh year, closed the earthly career of this brave and gifted officer. One of those best qualified to judge declared that Hodson with his regiment would have been worth almost a whole division, had he been spared to take part in the subsequent operations in Oude. His particular qualifications for Asiatic warfare would have found an appropriate field for their display.

Sir Colin Campbell, in a letter of condolence to his widow, dated March 13, thus expressed himself :

'I followed your noble husband to the grave myself, in order to mark in the most public manner my regret and esteem for the most brilliant soldier under my command, and one whom I am proud to call my friend.'

Hodson was educated at Rugby School in the time of Dr. Arnold, and as there has been some discussion regarding the identity of Hodson with the 'Harry East' of 'Tom Brown's School Days,' an extract is here given from page 118 of a 'History of Rugby School' by Lieutenant-Colonel Sydney Selfe, C.B., showing that this could not have been the case :

'Now let us take the popular "good-hearted and facetious Harry East," in many people's opinion the finest character in the best description of school life ever written.

'Here again, as in the Stanley-Arthur myth, tradition, which asserts that Hodson of "Hodson's Horse" was the original of East, is entirely at fault. In the first place, Hodson was not in the School House, but at Price's. Secondly, he did not go to Rugby until he was sixteen, so that it was impossible for him to have participated in those youthful escapades which so frequently resulted in Tom

and East being flogged; while at that age (16) Tom certainly, and East probably, had sobered down, for, as the book tells us, they were in the Fifth Form, "great strapping fellows, but still thorough boys, filling about the same place in the house that young Brooke filled when they were new boys, and much the same sort of fellow." Lastly, it is to be noted that his name has never even been hinted at in connection with East by any one of those pupils of Dr. Arnold who have supplied the information on which these notes are mainly based. Nor is this all, for Mr. Seton Karr scouts the idea emphatically thus:

"I knew Hodson intimately at Rugby,¹ and afterwards in India. He was actually married from my house in Calcutta, and he himself would have been much staggered at any suggestion that he was the Harry East of the book. I could name at least three younger boys at the School House who have a sort of general resemblance to the friend of Tom Brown, but Hodson certainly was not one of them. I may say that I discussed this very point with my contemporary, the late Dean Bradley, and he entirely agreed with me in everything that I said." . . . "Rough and tumble" as the Rugby of Arnold's time appears when compared with the Rugby of to-day, still it produced such men as Deans Stanley, Vaughan, and Bradley, A. H. Clough and Matthew Arnold, Hodson of Hodson's Horse, W. P. Adam, Bishop Valpy French, Lord Cross, Lord Aldenham, Sir Richard Temple, Sir Charles Hobhouse, and Tom Hughes himself."

¹ They were both in Price's House.

OUR LAST GREAT WAR.

PERSONAL NOTES.

BY SIR HENRY LUCY.

SIR JOHN ARDAGH—LORD ROBERTS—REDVERS BULLER—LORD AVA—
COLONEL CONGREVE, V.C. — A SEAFORTH HIGHLANDER — SIR
WILLIAM MAC CORMAC—LORD EDWARD CECIL—LORD METHUEN—
THE LAST VICTIM OF THE WAR.

THE nomination of Sir John Ardagh as a member of the Royal Commission appointed in the autumn of 1902 for the revision of sentences by court-martial in South Africa was in military circles regarded with suspicion. Designedly or not, it had for the War Office the advantage of withdrawing the Director of Military Intelligence from this country at a time when he might throw valuable light on one of the most important phases of the inquiry into the Boer War. The gravamen of the charge against the Government of the day was that when the struggle commenced they were in a state of almost childish ignorance of the magnitude of the task before them. They cheerfully regarded the campaign as a promenade to Pretoria, where, starting in October, the British troops were, according to their calculation, due to arrive not later than Christmas Day.

The natural inference in view of the disasters that followed was that the Intelligence Department was wholly at fault. Was it? Sir John Ardagh could tell. Fortunately returning home before the Royal Commission had completed its work, he related a simple story incredible on less unquestionable authority.

Previous to his evidence given before the Commission Ardagh was by no means reticent on the subject. Some months after the war commenced, when the bubble of Boer incapacity in the field had been painfully pricked, I happened to sit next to him at dinner at Henry Primrose's. A chance remark about the Intelligence Department elicited an emphatic and startling statement. He assured me that the Department had never been deceived, either as to the strength of the Boers in the field or as to the character of their military equipment. They knew to a gun the measure of

the armament quietly accumulated by the Boers in anticipation of the inevitable struggle. This information was from time to time communicated to the Secretary of State for War whilst preparations for the expedition were going forward. It is not reasonable to suppose Lord Lansdowne, who occupied the post at the time, would hide this light under a bushel. It was his duty, and it would unquestionably be fulfilled, to inform his colleagues in the Cabinet of the actual state of affairs. Yet, as history records, preparations for the mighty task of conquering the Transvaal and the Orange Free State were commenced upon a scale of inadequacy that threatened the safety of the Empire, and led to enormous loss of life and treasure.

Lord Roberts' personal testimony, coming from a different point of observation, confirms this amazing lack of capacity in high places. It was the want of a properly organised transport department that, to the uneasy surprise of the public at home, so long delayed him in Cape Town. It appears, according to his testimony, that no transport scheme was recognised by the War Office for service away from the railways. The only transport provided for the army landed at Cape Town, with the foe beleaguering Kimberley and Ladysmith, was the regimental first and second line, one carrying ammunition and supplies for two days, the other being the water-carts.

'We had nothing else,' said Lord Roberts, 'and it was, of course, impossible, lacking other means of transport, to carry on war in a country where there was no railway to speak of, where we must operate at a distance from the line, where we must have transport for a number of days' supply for men and horses, and carry a certain amount of kit for everybody.'

I remember how, after the real character of the task taken in hand with a light heart was realised, and General Buller was sent out to retrieve serious reverses, the nation, with calm assurance, awaited news of his arrival and subsequent movements.

Renewing an old acquaintance, he dined with us shortly after his return from the seat of war. Happening to speak of the hopes raised by his assumption of supreme command, and of the disappointment that settled down when the days passed and resembled each other inasmuch as there was no forward movement, he told me in full detail the same story Lord Roberts related as to the state of things existing when, months later, he succeeded to the command. As something had been done in the interval to remedy

the oversight of the War Office, Lord Roberts' plight was in degree less desperate than Buller's. For use of the latter there was practically no transport service, and precious months were lost whilst effort was made to patch one up.

Buller deeply felt the official snubbing that fell to his lot on his return from South Africa, a broken man. He was cheered by evidence not infrequently forthcoming that he had not lost the affection of the people of whom a brief twelvemonth earlier he had been the idol. This feeling is reflected in the following letter from Lady Audrey Buller :

'Downes, Crediton, Devonshire, Dec. 10, 1902.

'DEAR MR. LUCY,—I cannot refrain from writing you a line—first to say how gratified I am by your word in season about Sir Redvers in the paper which has retained the respect of the public more than any now in circulation (*Punch*). Also I want to ask you if you are aware that wherever Sir Redvers goes at present—whether in the North of England, the Midland, south, east, west, Scotland, Wales—he has the same enthusiastic reception as that with which his name was greeted in London when the relief of Ladysmith was announced. Instead of the feeling of the people and of the army having cooled with regard to him, it appears to be stronger and warmer than ever. I feel sure you would like to know this.

'Believe me, yours very sincerely,

'AUDREY BULLER.'

Of the administration of the War Office in respect of minor details a Lancashire factory owner, the employer of 900 men, told me a little story that would have been incredible prior to the publication of the evidence given before the Royal Commission. When the campaign broke out, a considerable number of his hands volunteered for the front. A couple presented themselves at the recruiting office. One was a prized workman, sober, industrious, strong, and healthy; the other a comparative weakling, who stood low in the scale of workmen. To the delight of the mill-owner, who greatly grudged his prospective loss, the capable man returned with the news that his companion had been accepted, whilst he was rejected. The grounds for this action were based on the fact that he had lost one of his front teeth, and was therefore ineligible for service in the British Army.

Musing over the mystery, it was remembered that formerly the army was furnished with muzzle-loaders, necessitating the biting

off of the cartridge before inserting it. Lack of a front tooth prevented a man performing this action, and a decree was promulgated forbidding the enlistment of any man so incapacitated. More than twenty years previous to the outbreak of the Boer War muzzle-loaders were abolished in the army. Every regiment was supplied with breech-loaders, which do not require the biting-off process that incidentally led to the revolt of the Sepoys in India. Nevertheless the regulation, never having been withdrawn, was in force in 1900, and may be so to this day.

Writing after the battle of Elandslaagte, General Ian Hamilton told me something of Lord Ava, son and heir of the Marquis of Dufferin. Reaching the camp at Ladysmith, he found himself unattached. Determined to see some fighting, he besought his friend, Ian Hamilton, to take him on his staff as a galloper. The colonel (as he then ranked) consented, and immediately after General French led out the little force reconnoitring towards Elandslaagte. Here was a splendid opportunity for the young galloper. But a fundamental difficulty presented itself. Lord Ava had no horse, and Ian Hamilton had none to lend him. He was not going to be out of the fight for the matter of a horse. Rifle in hand, he did the 'galloping' on foot, carrying orders to and fro for hours through the hot day.

His last instruction was to convey to the Gordons, lying down on the veldt under a hail of shell and rifle fire, the order to advance. Lord Ava confessed that when he came up to them he was so out of breath that he could hardly pass the word. By way of rest after the morning's work, and as a nice quiet way of regaining his breath, he joined the Gordons in their dauntless attack on the rocky ridge, every line manned with death-dealing Boers. When one ridge was carried at the point of the bayonet, others loomed up behind it. Lord Ava came out of the hell-fire unsinged.

The tale of comrades shot on either side of him is one of the saddest catalogues of the war. He told Ian Hamilton that through it all nothing struck him so much as the grim imperturbability of the Highlanders fighting their way slowly up those terrible ridges.

'They knelt to fire,' he said, 'as coolly and deliberately as if they were on parade.'

I wrote something of the affair in a London letter I at that time contributed to a syndicate of provincial daily papers. I sent a copy to Lord Ava's father, who replied :

'Clandeboyne, Co. Down, Dec. 13, '99.

'MY DEAR MR. LUCY,—The notice of Lord Ava has greatly gratified Lady Dufferin and myself and all his friends. It was only to-day that I had a letter from my daughter, Lady Helen (Munro-Ferguson), promising to send me an extract from your letter. I will not fail to tell her of your having so kindly thought of me in connection with the matter.

'We have three sons in Africa—one, a lieutenant in the 9th Lancers, is with Methuen; and, as you know, Ava is shut up in Ladysmith. A third has gone out, happily not to fight, but to write a book at the instance of a confiding and appreciative publisher.

'I only wish I could think he would refrain from poking his nose into danger. But that is a hopeless anticipation, for he will be sure to try to join one or other of his brothers.

'With renewed thanks, believe me,

Yours sincerely,

'DUFFERIN & AVA.'

One of the special correspondents invalided home from the war gave me a vivid account of the actual scene of the fight in which young Ava distinguished himself. Having been through many campaigns in the Soudan and in India, what struck him most was the uncanniness of the whole thing. There was no pomp of war, no stirring music, no gay uniforms, and, strangest thing of all, no visible enemy. What was seen from the standpoint of the British Staff was a number of men clad in khaki dodging their way up a hill, making for cover whenever possible.

Two or three suddenly dropped; perhaps one got up and pressed forward again. The others lay where they fell, dead or sorely wounded. As the Boers always fired from cover and used smokeless powder, there was nowhere sign of them. That he spoke of as a circumstance more than all others tending to demoralise the men. If they are to be shot, they at least like to see something of the enemy if only for the purpose of getting a shot at him. On the veldt there was nothing to be seen when in action save here and there a man falling by unseen agency.

Lord Ava lunched with us at Ashley Gardens on the eve of his departure for the war. He wrote his name on my wife's tablecloth, where it is embroidered among others of wider fame, but none renowned for greater gallantry. He died sword in hand in the desperate fight at Wagon Hill, when a night attack on Ladysmith was repulsed with heavy loss of officers and men, the former in exceptionally high numerical proportion.

Ian Hamilton, who bore a charmed life at Wagon Hill and other desperate fights in defence of Ladysmith, did not return to his command at the School of Musketry, Hythe, where I first made his acquaintance. In succession we had in Colonel Congreve a new neighbour in the Commandant's house at the foot of our garden. Dining with him one night, conversation turning on the Boer War, I asked had he chanced to come across young Roberts, son of the Field-Marshal.

'Yes,' he said, and conversation turned in another direction.

Later it occurred to me, what I had momentarily forgotten, that he had come in personal contact with the lieutenant at exceedingly close quarters. When the two field batteries under command of Colonel Long dashed to the front at Colenso, unlimbered within a thousand yards of the enemy's trenches, and found themselves under a blizzard of lead that mowed down men and horses, Buller, surveying through his field-glasses the desperate plight, turned to the group near him and said, 'Will any of you volunteer to save the guns?'

Three of his aides-de-camp, Congreve, Schofield, and Roberts, volunteered. Two gun teams galloped frantically through the deadly fire, each bringing back a precious gun. But they left young Roberts mortally wounded, insisting upon remaining where he fell, so that he should not hamper the others.

Colonel Congreve, who won the Victoria Cross by this gallant sally, had thus 'come across' Lieutenant Roberts, and when casually questioned on the subject, for all answer said 'Yes.'

It would be difficult to parallel this sublime reticence.

In March 1900 I met a young officer of the Seaforth Highlanders invalided home, whose simple narrative of his personal experiences further helped to realise the horrors of war. Advancing to the charge in one of the earlier engagements of the campaign, he was wounded in the foot. He fell to the ground, and his company pressed forward. Not meaning to be left behind when fighting was going on, he managed to get on his hands and feet and crawl along towards the Boer trenches. One of his men, looking back and seeing his plight, came to his assistance. Moving on some forty yards, the soldier on whose arm he leaned, shot through the head, tumbled down dead. Unable to proceed unassisted, the officer lay down by the corpse of his comrade. A fellow-officer coming along offered to carry him on his back. A big, lusty fellow, he proved a grievously

heavy load. With occasional rests his comrade got him under partial cover alongside four of his men. Within ten minutes the four privates and the officer who had carried him were shot dead by unseen foes safely ensconced on a neighbouring kopje.

The lamed Highlander thought his time had come at last. Whilst calmly awaiting it, a shell fell on the kopje behind which the Boers lurked, and their deadly fire was silenced. After lying two hours shelterless under a broiling sun, an ambulance cart came along. This seemed deliverance. It proved the most terrible of his experiences as far as the day had sped. Two sorely wounded men were already stretched in the cart. Before it had gone far over the rough way its terrible jolting literally shook the life out of them. When the cart arrived at the hospital tent they were lifted out dead. The surviving passenger was carried in and room made for him on a bed between two other sufferers. It was already night, the tent dimly lighted by a candlestick in a lantern. Soon after the Seaforth Highlander had been laid on the bed, his wounded foot dressed, the man on his right died. Through two long hours his companion on the left moaned terribly. Then silence fell. He also had answered his last roll-call. Unable to move, useless to call for help, when the candle flickered out the Seaforth Highlander lay in the dark all night between his quiet motionless companions.

It would be thought that for a young fellow just turned twenty this was experience of the kind sufficient to last a lifetime. His sorest trouble was that his wound was slow of healing, and, as he put it, 'now Bobs is about' there was every prospect of the war being over before he would be permitted to rejoin his regiment.

Sir William MacCormac, President of the Royal College of Surgeons, whose volunteered service at the front in South Africa was greeted with a peal of applause in the House of Commons, was a well-known figure in London society. To begin with, being six feet four in height, he was not easily overlooked in a crowd. Beyond that was his reputation as the most skilful surgeon of the day. He was more particularly an adept in dealing with gunshot wounds, having acquired wide experience at Sedan and other battlefields in the Franco-German war.

When thirty years earlier he volunteered for that work he did not leave behind him in London a large or lucrative practice. Matters were quite different when in 1899 he went out to the

Boer War. By sheer ability he had climbed to the top of the professional ladder.

Like many giants in physical stature, he was womanlike in the gentleness of his disposition. Only those who knew him intimately had inkling of the good he did by stealth, occasionally blushing with genuine vexation to find it fame. When he sailed for the Cape his skilful and successful treatment of Edward Prince of Wales, after his accident at Baron Ferdinand Rothschild's country house, was fresh in memory of the public. One of the many quiet ways in which the Prince showed his grateful appreciation of the services rendered was to bring about Sir William's nomination and election to that exceedingly close preserve, the Marlborough Club. For many years he had been a member of the Reform and Athenæum, where his occasional little dinners were among the most interesting of social functions.

Wounds received on the battlefield were no new thing to MacCormac, who, as I have said, served at Sedan and some of the earlier battlefields of the Franco-German war. During the Boer War the great surgeon wrote to me from the front: 'I never saw anything so terrible as some of the cases that come under my hand in apparently endless succession.'

Among some other relics of the campaign, Sir William sent home the first shell fired upon Buller's force when they made the earliest attack on Colenso. Calling one afternoon on Lady MacCormac, I found that though historically interesting it was viewed with mixed feelings in a quiet household. It did not explode at Colenso, an additional reason why some time, possibly in the dead of night, it might assert itself in Harley Street.

Some of the ladies who, emulous of the example of Florence Nightingale, flocked out to the battlefields in South Africa, had a rough time of it. Others were rather enthusiastic than useful. I heard of one, a lady well known in London society, passing the cot of a grizzled sergeant brought into hospital after Magersfontein. Wishing to do something kind, she sponged his face.

'There,' she cooed, 'you'll feel refreshed after that.'

'Yes, ma'am,' replied the sergeant, 'you're the seventh kind lady that has done it this afternoon.'

Lord Edward Cecil, who was shut up in Mafeking, was one of Lord Kitchener's young men. He served on the Sirdar's staff in

the Soudan and earned that not very demonstrative person's fullest confidence. In a private letter home, Lord Kitchener told a characteristic story about Lord Salisbury's son. He heard it from a well-known Dutchman who had fulfilled large contracts for provisioning the British Army. Just before the war broke out this man received instructions to send a certain quantity of stores to Mafeking. Whilst shipment was going forward Lord Edward Cecil called upon him and asked for particulars of the stores. These supplied, he said :

'Could you send four times as much ?'

'Yes, if I had authority,' said the Dutchman.

'Very well,' said Lord Edward. 'You send four times as much as you have orders for, and I will give my note of hand for the cost of the surplus quantity. If the Government don't pay you, I will.'

Considering the fact that Lord Edward's financial resources were chiefly represented by his pay as a major, an undertaking to provide out of his private purse a sum of between £6,000 and £7,000 was characteristically daring. The Dutchman, not quite satisfied with the personal security of the young major, asked for another name at the back of the bill. Baden-Powell immediately added his, pledging the whole of his private property to meet the responsibility. Mafeking was accordingly stocked with provisions and general stores to an amount four times more than highly placed authorities thought was sufficient.

According to Lord Kitchener's testimony, that is how the place managed to hold out.

A private letter, reaching me from one of the Yeomanry who went out to join the command of Sir Frederick Carrington, gives in a few sentences a picturesque account of the receipt of the news of the relief of Mafeking. Arrived in the harbour at Beira, he wrote :

'The news was signalled to us from the gunboat *Partridge*. The men collected, gave three ringing cheers, and we passed the news on to the rest of the fleet. As each ship got it, out rang the cheers.'

This same impartial and reliable authority reports what was a fatally weak spot in the strength of the splendid contingent of Volunteer forces :

'We have,' he wrote, 'quite lost confidence in our officers. They seem to know absolutely nothing about drill, excepting, of course, the adjutant and the colonel, who are very smart men.'

He proceeds to give a verbatim account of drill conducted on deck by the captain and lieutenant. After much stuttering and embarrassment, a command was given. Obedience to it had the result of bringing the men in a confused mass against the bulwarks, in the absence of which, blindly obeying orders, they would have marched into the sea.

Another letter from the same correspondent gives a touching picture of life and death in the camp.

'We have this morning had the first death in the sharpshooters' battalion. It is that of a young fellow in the 67th, who, suffering from dysentery, died in his tent with his comrades round him. The funeral was simple and impressive. The dead man's section filed past his tent to take a last look at him as he lay at peace in his rude khaki-covered coffin.

'The lid, carrying a shield cunningly cut from a biscuit-tin, engraved with name and date by an artist comrade, was nailed down. An officer, advancing, laid at the head of the coffin the dead soldier's sombrero, on it a wreath of wildflowers and leaves, woven with his own rough hands. The firing party stood outside with heads bowed on the butts of their rifles. A sharp order, and they moved off with arms reversed, in advance of the coffin borne by eight men. Slowly they marched across the camp and across the railway to the little cemetery with its three English graves, a new one having been dug at the foot of a drooping tree like a mountain ash. Behind it towered a feathery palm. The Major read the service, and the bugles took up the call which ends each day of a soldier's life—"The Last Post."

'After the first bar softly died away they paused, and the firing party rattled forth a volley. The next bar, with its lively air, rang out, followed by another volley. The last few bars are on two notes, first low, then high. Every man standing round the grave recalled the words, so often repeated, to the accompaniment of these ringing notes: "Lie down; good-night; go to sle-eep."

'A parting volley, and the ceremony was over.'

Strong feeling against Lord Methuen was stirred in some quarters as the result of the carnage that marked his command on the Modder River. I heard a true story that showed him in a fairer light. A mother who lost her only son at Magersfontein wrote, bitterly upbraiding him with being the personal cause of the death of her boy, sent on an ill-planned, bootless errand. In due time

she received a reply, written in pencil on a rough bit of paper, for which he humbly apologised. He explained it was all he had at hand, and only a biscuit-box to use as desk. Instead of resenting the tone of the letter, or endeavouring to exonerate himself, he filled his paper with expressions of the tenderest sympathy with the stricken mother. He entered into full detail of the young officer's death, met sword in hand at the head of his troop.

'If,' he wrote, 'you had seen as I did how nobly your boy died doing his duty, you would have been proud to spare him to your country.'

Similar kind-heartedness was shown by his commanding officer in the case of the cutting off of another young hero, Eric Sutherland, son of the chairman of the P. & O. Company. Special interest attached to the affair, not only from the gallantry of the young officer, who had only just joined his regiment, but from the fact that he was the last victim of the long war, news of his death saddening his parents on the very day peace was proclaimed in London.

When tidings reached Klerksdorp of the event, Lieutenant Wilson was sent out under the white flag and brought back the dead body by the night train. The commanding officer wrote to Sir Thomas Sutherland:

'The next day your son was buried in the cemetery at Klerksdorp, all the men and officers of the regiment available being present. The men of H Company, Fredericstad, made a coffin, which was carried by the officers and sergeants of the regiment. The Boer commandant told Lieutenant Wilson that your son was the pluckiest man he had ever seen. He appears, when cut off, to have fought his way on foot along the line of kopjes for nearly a mile, and refused to surrender although the Boers called on him repeatedly to do so. The commandant said that his men, of whom there were 170, were awaiting the result of the peace negotiations. Your son was shot through the head and lived a very short time after the Boers picked him up. They paid him every possible attention, carried him to a farm close by, but he only survived a very short time. They were full of admiration for him. In your sorrow it will be a great comfort to know how gallantly your son behaved and died. We are very proud of it for the sake of the regiment.'

In the sad annals of the war there is nothing more illustrious than this picture of the English lad, just left school, fighting his way for a mile against 170 Boers, preferring death to surrender.

A PEASANT OF LORRAINE.

It was in the palmy days of the Second Empire that Michel Kopp, invalided home, with the loss of his left arm, from service in Mexico, wandered far enough across the border of native Alsace to fall in with Suzanne Meunier, the daughter of a Lorraine peasant proprietor, and, finding favour in her sight (for he was a fine-looking, powerful fellow, notwithstanding his empty sleeve), was duly united to her in wedlock under the auspices of M. le Maire and M. le Curé. The newly married pair contrived between them to raise a sum sufficient for the purchase of a humble inn, or rather *cabaret*, in the village of Gravelotte, near Metz, where for some years they led a life of modest prosperity and complete contentment, and where two children, a boy and a girl, were born to them.

Completely contented they both were; although the bare, high-lying landscape round about their abode could boast of little natural attractiveness, and although for society they were dependent upon their sparse neighbours, varied by occasional waggoners or carriers who pulled up at the *Cheval Blanc* to drink a *chope* and pass the time of day. If Suzanne was convinced that Lorraine was the grandest country in the world, her conviction was in no danger of being shaken by comparisons, since she had never seen, and had small prospect of ever seeing, any other, while the company of her Michel was all that she asked for. Stalwart, red-bearded, taciturn Michel was fortunate in the fact that he adored his wife, and Gravelotte as a place of residence met his unexacting requirements. Certainly it was not Paris, nor even Strasbourg; but he had seen as much as he cared to see of cities and had established himself by choice in a quiet village where he could attend to his business all day and sleep soundly at night remote from war's alarms.

From the latter point of view his choice, to be sure, was ill inspired; but at the time when he became the owner of the *Cheval Blanc* nobody could have foretold that it would prove so—unless perchance a couple of Teutons, Bismarck and Moltke by name, who may have been in a position to foretell various developments not contemplated by Michel Kopp or the Emperor of the French. Nor indeed, when war broke out in the year 1870, did either the Emperor

Napoleon or Michel imagine that it was destined to be waged upon the soil of France. The proclamation of hostilities was received by the latter with a shake of the head and with some muttered grumblings; for he did at least foresee the transit of masses of troops, and experience had taught him that the passage of armies is seldom a pleasant affair for the inhabitants of traversed districts. On the other hand, it might be good for trade, and it was doubtless necessary that *ces gredins de Prussiens* should be given a lesson.

What kind of a lesson those gentlemen learned and what they taught their would-be teachers all the world knows—or is, it may be, now in process of discovering; for the mills of the gods grind slowly, and such discoveries are not made all at once. The speedy and bewildering discovery made by Michel Kopp was that the vitality of Imperial France had somehow crumbled. He could not doubt it, though at moments he had difficulty in believing it. Well he knew, as a soldier and a fairly intelligent mortal, that a campaign which opens with defeats is in most cases a lost campaign, and after Reichshoffen and Forbach hope died within him. But he did not say this to his wife or to anybody else, being of a silent habit.

Bright, alert little Suzanne, for her part, lost neither hope nor courage. It is true that her ignorance of what was taking place was absolute. She knew that Marshal MacMahon had lost a battle; but what of that? All armies, even the French army, must meet with checks sometimes, and, like a more exalted personage, she cried, '*Tout peut se réparer!*' Busy from morning to night, for the rest, in serving the soldiers, of whom many thousands were now encamped in the neighbourhood and whose spirits—a trifle depressed by suspense, by reports of further mishaps and by the atrocious wet weather to which they were exposed—she revived with smiles and cheering words. Holding her baby girl in her arms and leading her four-year-old boy François by the hand, she would move amongst them and break out into snatches of patriotic songs while she bustled to and fro, until the drenched customers joined in and the windows vibrated to a stentorian chorus—

*'Allons, enfants de la patrie,
Le jour de gloire est arrivé!'*

It was long in arriving, that day of glory. For the poor fellows who tossed off Suzanne's wine and beer it never arrived; unless some gleam of glory may with truth be said to have followed that

fateful dawn when, with clatter of attendant cavalry and glitter of gold-laced uniforms, a carriage, in which sat huddled a grey-faced man and a young boy, dashed past the door of the *Cheval Blanc*—the Emperor and the Prince Imperial leaving in hot haste for Verdun. Hardly had this not very inspiring *cortège* passed out of sight before the thunder of artillery was heard, announcing that the great fight which was to be known to history as the battle of Gravelotte had begun. Of the swaying fortunes of that fierce and protracted struggle the inhabitants of Gravelotte saw little more than the crew of a ship caught in a hurricane see of the elements by which they are overwhelmed. Suzanne's recollection of it was a mere welter of smoke, uproar, and hideous carnage, throughout which the French troops appeared, upon the whole, to be forcing back their assailants. Always for the rest of her life she claimed it as a victory, and such indeed it might have turned out to be, had Marshal Bazaine exhibited a little more vigour or the Saxons at Saint-Privat a little less. But at the time, even if she had been able to understand what was happening, she could have attended to nothing except the wounded, who were carried into the *Cheval Blanc* in increasing numbers until there literally was not space left for another man. Not much could she do for these unhappy wretches beyond giving them water and attempting, with such appliances as she could lay hands on, to dress their wounds; but at length a couple of army surgeons arrived and were glad to avail themselves of her services. She never liked to speak afterwards of the sickening horrors of that day; yet she accomplished wonders, the indefatigable little woman, and did not lose heart. Only when night had fallen and fighting had ceased did she find time to address an eager word of inquiry to her husband:

'The Prussians are driven back, *hein*?'

'It seems so,' he answered, with a sigh; 'but—we do not advance.'

There were to be no more advance movements for the enveloped French army, which fell back sullenly upon Metz, waiting for relief that could not be, or at any rate was not, extended to it. Bazaine would, of course, ultimately fight his way out: not only the Messins but the whole ravaged, famished countryside felt confident of that. Nor was the catastrophe of Sedan deemed conclusive. All was not lost! France was rid of that imbecile of an Emperor, and the Republic, bleeding but unconquered, would scatter her barbarian invaders, as she had done at the close of the previous century, when all Europe

had been in league against her. *Aux armes, citoyens ! Formez vos bataillons !* It was, in any case, inconceivable that nearly two hundred thousand brave French soldiers would suffer themselves to be held in a trap until hunger subdued them. Inconceivable alike to Suzanne, to Lorraine, and to France ! Possibly not so to Michel Kopp, who had served under Marshal Bazaine in Mexico and had his own opinion of that commander, which he kept, as usual, to himself.

If the Marshal possessed that sad kind of courage which admits and accepts the inevitable, Michel Kopp was made after another pattern. Nothing, Michel thought, should be called inevitable except death, while there are several things to which death must be held preferable. Only too well did his wife guess what was passing in his mind, and what never passed his lips, during those dreary autumn days when investment became grimly rigorous and when rumours of distant victories or reverses were wafted fitfully and vaguely to the *Cheval Blanc*. It was without surprise that, on a night of wind and rain, soon after Metz had been converted by lamentable capitulation into a Prussian stronghold, she saw him beckon to her and heard him say rather hoarsely :

' Eh bien, ma mie, je te quitte.'

Slung over his shoulder was a chassepot, which he had taken from a dead man some time before and had concealed. He could easily have appropriated a uniform also, and might thus possibly have increased his slender chance of escaping with his life ; but he had omitted that precaution.

' You are going to join the franc-tireurs ?' whispered Suzanne, clinging to him, white-faced and wide-eyed.

He nodded. *' If I can find any.'*

' With your one arm !'

' Parbleu !—since I cannot give myself another ! Besides, maimed as I am, I can still handle a rifle.'

' They will kill you, Michel !' she moaned, the tears running down her cheeks.

' Not before I have killed two or three of them, perhaps. However that may be, I can stay here no longer. Allons, ma femme, il le faut ! Take courage, and God protect you !'

She did not even try to dissuade him, knowing that it would be useless. He slipped out quietly through the back door and vanished into the darkness. She never saw him again. Long afterwards she heard how he had fallen into the clutches of the enemy—as indeed

he had been almost certain to do—and had incurred the instant doom which could not but overtake all civilians caught carrying arms.

* * * * *

When France had resisted the invader to the utmost possible limit of resistance, and when conditions of peace had been imposed upon her which may have been justifiable from a military point of view, but which seemed as unwise as they were cruel from any other, the inhabitants of the annexed districts were granted a choice of evils. They might migrate to their own mutilated country or elsewhere; they might stay where they were and be naturalised as Germans; finally, they might, while retaining their French nationality, keep possession of their houses and lands in Alsace-Lorraine, provided that they acquired a permanent domicile across the frontier. The latter privilege was, of course, only applicable to the well-to-do; the bulk of the unhappy people had to choose between expulsion (which, if adopted by all of them, would mean the final abandonment of their provinces to the conquerors) and the bitter humiliation of accepting the duties and liabilities implied in German citizenship. The conquerors, it was said, could not have offered more generous terms. Obviously they could not—and by that very fact the annexation stands eternally self-condemned. Many of the victims departed, with tears in their eyes and vain wrath in their hearts, for Algeria or America; but there were also many—Suzanne Kopp amongst them—who decided to remain as subjects of the newly crowned Emperor.

‘It will not be for long,’ the haggard little woman whispered to a few of her wavering intimates, ‘and when the revenge comes they must not be able to say that their jargon is the language of Lorraine.’

That there would be a war of revenge she was as fully persuaded as was Prince Bismarck himself, and she might even have agreed with that practical statesman as to the imprudence of leaving two frontier fortresses of immense strength in the hands of an irreconcilable neighbour; only she did not know, as he did, that for many a year to come the neighbour who had been made irreconcilable must perforce keep the peace. Had she been shown what lay before her, she might have hesitated; though the chances are that, even so, she would have set her teeth and adhered to her resolution; for, in addition to her love for Lorraine, she had a peasant’s obstinacy and a peasant’s instinctive thrift. It is not when one is a widow and has

two children to bring up that one can throw away an established means of earning a livelihood to roam the world in quest of another !

Thus, during the years which succeeded the war, curious visitors to Metz, coming from all quarters of the globe, found an intelligent and pleasant-mannered guide to the battle-fields in the quiet little landlady of the *Gasthaus zum Weissen Ross* at Gravelotte. Quiet and pleasant-mannered she always was ; but she had done with gaiety, and no tourist ever heard her laugh.

'Listen, sir,' she said, in answer to one of them who had asked her the foolish question that most of them asked. 'We should be glad to be again what we used to be—that is evident, is it not ? But it is best not to talk about such things. I gain my bread from day to day, I say nothing, and I wait. *Voilà !*'

And to another, who wanted to know whether the Germans were liked by their new fellow-countrymen, she replied briefly, with a tightening of her lips, '*On ne les aime pas*. As for me, they murdered my husband, a brave man who only did his duty. How would you have me love them ?'

She hated them with an inward hatred all the more intense because she allowed herself no outward exhibition of it. She taught her little boy François to hate them (and to conceal his hatred) as a religious duty. Every morning and every evening she prayed the good God to reward the Prussians—Germans she never called them—according to their deeds. But she had no prejudice against the money of the big, fair-haired, not unfriendly soldiers who lounged over her counter, swilling beer, and who, for their part, had a quite kindly feeling for '*die alte Kopp*.' Old they called her, and old indeed she looked before reaching middle age—having lived through what she had lived through !

So year followed year, and the European supremacy of the German Empire remained unchallenged, and hopes momentarily raised by the Russian alliance died away, and François Kopp approached manhood. Then came a trial for which Suzanne had long been prepared, but which hit her stout heart none the less heavily for that. It was impossible that François should ever serve in the ranks of the German army, and consequently impossible that he should reside much longer in German territory. His mother had saved the necessary money and had made the requisite arrangements for his transfer to Paris, where employment in a large grocery establishment had been secured for him, and sorely

reluctant though the lad was to leave home, he raised no protest against a measure which he recognised as imperative.

'*Courage, ma mère !*' said he, winking away the tears which he could not keep out of his eyes as he stepped into the train at Metz. 'I shall come back to see you soon.'

And Suzanne, who knew that he would never come back, answered cheerfully, '*Bien sûr que tu me reviendras, mon enfant !*'

More considerations than one seemed to make for the lad's permanent exile—the length and expense of the journey, the doubt whether it would be safe for him, even after his naturalisation as a French subject, to set foot in Lorraine again, the certainty of his soon forming fresh ties amidst surroundings so novel and alienating. There had been no tears in Suzanne's eyes when she threw her arms round her son's neck for the last time, because she had not wanted to deprive him of the courage to which he had exhorted her ; but a few coursed slowly down her withered cheeks while she trudged homewards. Foreseeing always what lay before her boy, she had tried not to indulge him ; but he had been so dear to her that sternness had been beyond her power, and what pained her now even more than the wrench of parting was the thought of his forlornness and homesickness in that distant, indifferent city. It was true that his youth would speedily enable him to enjoy life and forget, whereas her age would suffer her to do neither ; but that was a sad sort of consolation. This carking grief also she laid to the charge of the ruthless invaders who broke up families and drove out widows' sons. *Ah, sales Prussiens !*

Matters fell out very much in accordance with her anticipations. After a period of initial despondency, which his letters betrayed, despite their valiant tone, François found his feet in Paris, evinced business abilities, rose high in the good graces of his employers, prospered, and—took root. Being an affectionate and grateful son, he wrote home regularly, if at less and less frequent intervals, and in process of time began to accompany his letters with money remittances which were not unwelcome to his thrifty mother ; but of visiting Lorraine he soon ceased to speak, save indirectly, by stating that he never had, and was not likely to get, a holiday of more than twenty-four hours' duration. When at length he made a prudent marriage which empowered him to set up a modest business of his own, he was of course busier and more fettered to Paris than ever. Sometimes he expressed a longing to embrace his old mother once more, but not as if he saw much prospect of

its being gratified ; and though he told her that she would have to come to Paris and be introduced to her daughter-in-law '*un de ces beaux jours*,' he must have been aware of her incapacity even to contemplate so great an adventure. In short, the young bird, obeying Nature's laws, had quitted the nest, and Suzanne made no complaint of an estrangement which she had foreseen and decreed. Only she did not forget who had rendered it obligatory.

One thing—one danger—she did strangely forget. There are dangers, no doubt, against which one does not take precautions, for the simple reason that they appear too outrageous to be reckoned with. Nobody, for instance, would deem it worth while to warn his children against any temptation that they might experience to rob or murder him ; nobody supposes that his children will ever experience such a temptation. Yet it should be obvious enough that a pretty girl, whose business it is to serve guests, military and civilian, with mugs of beer every day and all day, is liable to excite the admiring attentions of some of them. That much was, indeed, obvious to Suzanne, who saw the admiration and the attentions, and sometimes muttered anathemas under her breath at the sight ; but as for her daughter Victorine being moved thereby to any other sentiments than suppressed disgust and disdain—*allons donc* ! To Suzanne these Teutons were unclean beasts, one and all.

Now it would really have been necessary to be obsessed by race-hatred in its extremest form in order to stigmatise Max Arndt as an unclean beast. That gentle, blue-eyed giant, who was serving his appointed term with the colours at Metz, grew gradually frequent at the *Gasthaus zum Weissen Ross* and gradually ingratiated himself with pretty Victorine, who thought him as handsome and prepossessing as in truth he was. Always respectful, too, and good-humouredly submissive to occasional snubs from *die alte Kopp* ; although the latter did not dislike him personally, because even she could not. In her view he was an amiable young fellow—likewise, by the inscrutable will of heaven, a Prussian. He could not, to be sure, help that ; nor can a viper help being a viper. But vipers are none the less vipers and Prussians are no less Prussians because they cannot help it. Afflicted with such a congenital curse, how could the man be dangerous ? Not for a moment did Suzanne imagine that he was. Literally not for a single moment, until that dreadful evening when Victorine, with rosy cheeks and downcast eyes, informed her that Max had made a formal offer of marriage—which had not been refused !

'I told him that I must ask your permission, *ma mère*,' the girl made haste to add; 'I told him that I was afraid you would not be pleased. I could not tell him that I did not love him.'

The mother, pale and trembling, found it hard to believe her ears. 'But—but it is impossible!' she gasped out.

'What is impossible?' asked Victorine, plucking up spirit. 'At least it is not impossible for me to love Max Arndt with all my heart.'

'*Tu dis? . . . tu dis?*' . . .

'That I love Max Arndt,' answered the girl resolutely. 'I am not ashamed of it; it is not shameful. But if it were, I should still love him.'

Suzanne gazed at her daughter with piteous, sunken eyes, in which there was infinite sorrow, but no trace of anger. All she said was: 'My poor child, this is a great misfortune for you.'

'It is no misfortune,' Victorine protested, 'unless you insist upon making one of it. It will be a joy and a happiness if you will but allow it to be so. Oh, mother, don't look at me like that! What crime have I committed? What crime has Max committed? He is a German, yes; but—are not we also Germans now?'

Suzanne staggered back as if she had received a blow in the face. Then—for she was not a very refined person, poor soul!—she spat noisily. 'For the love of God,' she returned in a hoarse whisper, 'never say such a thing as that to me again!'

But this gust of passion passed quickly, and it was in her accustomed mild, slightly tremulous voice that she resumed:

'*Écoute-moi, mon enfant*. It is not true that we are Germans. If we were, should I have deprived myself of my only son? We are French people in captivity, waiting for our release. We have waited long, and God knows how long we may yet have to wait; but when the day of release comes, it will be seen that we have never changed. Do you not understand that to marry a Prussian would be treachery to France?'

What poor Victorine chiefly understood was that to reject Max Arndt would be treachery to him and to herself. What he had given her to understand was that her mother was the victim of an illusion, and that, be the course of future events what it might, the *Reichsland* could never cease to be a German province, inasmuch as Metz and Strasbourg had been rendered impregnable. A patriot himself, he respected the patriotism of others and bore Madame Kopp no ill-will for her silent *intransigence*; only he held that when hatred is

demonstrably impotent, love should be allowed to try its hand as a substitute. In the above views Victorine naturally concurred ; but she met with no more success in urging them than the French forces, according to Max, could hope for were they to attempt carrying Metz and Strasbourg by storm.

'All that you say, my child,' her mother sadly replied, 'only means that you love a Prussian. I have called that a great misfortune for you ; do not make me call it a disgrace ! How can it be possible for you to marry the man ? Does one, I ask you, marry one's father's murderer ?'

Victorine's father had not been murdered by Max Arndt, who—if that mattered—was not even a Prussian, being a Bavarian by birth and a good Catholic by religion ; but to put forward such pleas on his behalf was evidently waste of breath. The girl had to choose between her lover and her mother, the latter of whom confronted her uncompromisingly with that issue.

'You are of an age to decide for yourself, Victorine,' the old woman said ; 'your life belongs to you, not to me. Do what you will with it. But if you become a Prussian, you are no longer my daughter. You know,' she went on, her voice breaking and the tears flowing from her tired eyes, 'whether I love you or not ; you know that you are all I have in the world, and that it would break my heart to lose you by death or by something worse than death. Well, it makes no difference ! From the moment that you commit this infamy we are strangers. I can never speak to you or look at you again. *J'ai dit !*'

It was perhaps inevitable that the little domestic tragedy should end as it did, although in any other country it might have had another sequel. For all her willingness to believe that her actual nationality was an accomplished, unalterable fact, Victorine was a Frenchwoman, and one consequence of her being so was that in this dire extremity it seemed to her less possible to break her mother's heart than her own. She yielded rather suddenly and without murmuring—as one yields to sheer necessity, on recognising it as such.

So Max Arndt went his way, after delivering himself of some bitter reproaches and making some unmerited, uncontradicted accusations. He went his way, and suns rose and set, and Victorine served customers with beer, as before. Two years later she married Jules Roux, a farmer of the neighbourhood, who may have been conscious of stooping a little in taking to wife the daughter of a

cabaretière, but who proved himself a kind husband, and with whom she lived happily enough, as happiness goes in a wry world. Omelettes are not made without breaking eggs, and if the breaking of a human heart or two should chance to be among the microscopic outgrowths of decisions taken for high reasons of State, high statesmen are in small danger of sleeping any the less soundly on that account.

Long after all the statesmen concerned in the transfer of Lorraine to the German Empire had entered upon the sleep which knows no waking, Suzanne Kopp held firmly to the hope that their impious work would be undone; but by degrees she had to relinquish that of beholding with her own eyes the vindication of right and justice. By degrees she came to perceive that if Russia ever embarked upon war with a formidable foe, it would not be for the sake of restoring the lost provinces to her ally; and although the establishment of the *Triple Entente*, of which she read in the newspapers, gave her a certain satisfaction, she had even less confidence in the English, a selfish, commercial people, little given to taking up arms in support of a neighbour's quarrel. The incident of Agadir warmed her heart and gave her some comfort. 'At last we show that we are no longer afraid to talk to them!' she cried. But, as the result of much talk, followed by territorial concessions, that cause for strife passed peacefully away, and she was conscious that her own life also was passing towards its end. At the age of seventy-five she was a very old woman, bent almost double and hobbling about the house with difficulty, supported by two sticks; yet she would not give up her independence or the business which she still carried on through underlings, refusing the hospitality constantly pressed upon her by her daughter and her son-in-law.

'No, no, my children,' she would answer; 'I like better to die in my own bed under my own roof. Come and see me when you are not too busy, and when you cannot come yourselves send me the little ones. I have all I want in this world—except one thing, which you cannot give me.'

Honest Jules Roux was in the habit of turning the conversation when his mother-in-law made allusion to that one thing. Not that he was out of sympathy with her upon the subject; but he was a prudent man who did not wish for trouble with the authorities, and who very sensibly opined that nobody is ever the worse off for keeping his mouth shut. On similar grounds he did not care to let his children visit the *Gasthaus zum Weissen Ross* too often.

Their grandmother also was prudent, or had been ; but now in her old age she had grown garrulous and sometimes seemed unable to control herself, saying what would have been better left unsaid. It was a pity that she should stuff the children's heads with tales of 'old, unhappy, far-off things, And battles long ago'—a still greater pity that she should teach them to sing the *Marseillaise* and *Mourir pour la Patrie*. To die for one's country—*à la bonne heure* ! But how does one serve one's country, or a country to which one has unfortunately ceased to belong, by being arrested and sent to prison for sedition ?

Victorine, now middle-aged, placid and stoutish, was of her husband's mind. Seldom glancing at a newspaper, and taking little interest in international politics, she was nevertheless aware that nobody dared to threaten Germany and that nobody, except her poor old mother, dreamed any longer of such a thing as the retrocession of Metz and its neighbourhood. For herself, she could not remember her French infancy, and if she did not greatly like the Germans as a people, perhaps she could not forget that once upon a time she had found it possible to love one of them. At any rate, she did not want war. What decent, peaceable farmer's wife, domiciled in the destined area of military operations, would ?

But it is not of farmers' wives or other peaceably disposed persons that the rulers of this world (who, to be sure, are themselves for the most part ruled by forces beyond their control) think when diplomatic suavities are silenced by an order for mobilisation. Such an order came with startling suddenness to Gravelotte on a certain summer morning and brought consternation to the heart of Victorine Roux, who had taken up her quarters at the *Weissen Ross* some days before in order to be with her evidently dying mother. Old Suzanne lay on her narrow bed, in full possession of her faculties and in no pain, but slowly ceasing, like a worn-out machine, and speaking scarcely at all. The news that Germany was at war with Russia and France, and perhaps also with England, was kept from her until evening, when the children came rushing in to announce it—with an electrifying effect upon their moribund grandmother.

'At last !' she cried, trying to raise herself—'at last *la revanche* ! Oh, thanks be to the Blessed Virgin ! I have prayed so much !—I have prayed so long !' . . .

She was in a sort of ecstasy. That war would mean victory for France she no more doubted than she cared to inquire why war had

come at all. Jules Roux, anxious, perturbed, and by no means over-confident as to results, related some history to her about a rupture between Austria and a small country called Servia, which Russia held herself bound to protect, and explained that, Germany being the ally of Austria while France was the ally of Russia, all Europe had to be set in a blaze; but she made short work of that, remarking, with truth, that when one wishes to fight one need never search far for a pretext. Presently she turned towards Victorine and said quaintly with a glad smile: '*C'est ton brave homme de père qui doit se frotter les mains là-haut!*'

Almost it seemed as if joy and excitement had brought her back to life from the very brink of the grave; but nothing could have accomplished that miracle, although it may be that the end was retarded by sheer longing to behold once again the beloved French uniforms on the scene where so many had lain trampled and stained in the mud and blood of four-and-forty years back. It was, of course, impossible for such a spectacle to be witnessed within ten days, and at the close of the tenth day old Suzanne's family were grouped round her bed, expecting that every laboured breath she drew would be her last. She appeared to be unconscious; yet, when a servant stole into the room and said something to her son-in-law, she caught the low words and started.

'They are in Alsace?' she panted—'we are in Alsace? We have taken Altkirch? *Ah, merci, mon Dieu, merci!*'

Making a supreme effort, she lifted her head and began, in a cracked, quavering voice, to chant the *Marseillaise*—

*'Allons, enfants de la patrie,
Le jour de gloire est arrivé! . . .'*

The poor, withered, colourless hands beat time upon the patched quilt, fire gleamed for an instant in the sunken eyes, and with that faltering, pathetic pæan upon her lips old Suzanne Kopp passed away from a troubled world—*felix opportunitate mortis!*

‘MY FATHER.’

BY THE HON. A. E. GATHORNE-HARDY.

A HUNDRED years ago, on Saturday, October 1, 1814, a third son, afterwards christened Gathorne, his mother's maiden name, was born to John and Isabel Hardy at Bradford in Yorkshire. William Wilberforce, the philanthropist, wrote at once to his old friend the father, congratulating him on the addition to ‘the good breed of Hardy,’ and there was already little risk of the ‘good breed’ becoming extinct, as three sisters and two brothers had preceded him into the world. Six sisters followed in the course of the next fourteen years. Families were families in that and the succeeding generation! I myself had five brothers and five sisters, and sixty-seven first cousins.

‘Saturday’s bairn has far to go!’ So runs the old proverb. If construed literally, the distich is not very applicable to my father, who seldom cared to leave his beloved home unless absolutely obliged to travel; but there is a sense in which his pilgrimage was indeed a long one, as he completed his ninety-second year before he passed peacefully away on October 30, 1906. His public life has been recorded in the biography which I compiled from his diaries and correspondence. On this his centenary I wish to dwell only on his home life and personal characteristics.

In his diary for August 12, 1853, there occurs this strange entry. I am unable to identify the ‘Wallis’ whose admonition he quotes:

‘Wallis said a strange thing to me, perhaps a true one, that I require some great trial or affliction for my character. A sad need if it be so! Can I not be schooled without it? If it be to improve me for ever I must not dread it.’

He was ‘schooled without it.’ There never was a long life more free from ‘great trials and afflictions,’ and his character expanded and softened in almost unbroken sunshine. Bereavement he did not altogether escape, and he felt deeply the loss of two beloved daughters and a son who were taken from him in the prime of life; but the marvel lies in the extent to which he was exempt from the ordinary lot in this respect. His ‘almost—to me quite—perfect wife’ blessed his home till 1897, the sixtieth year of their

ideal union, and the twenty-three children and grandchildren who joined in the festivities at Hemsted and attended the thanksgiving service at Benenden Church on the occasion of their parents' golden wedding in 1888 all survived him in good health. His life was indeed a happy one.

'Honour, love, obedience, troops of friends' he had all in full measure; his faith was ever calm and unbroken, and he had the faculty of making up his mind finally and conclusively in matters of controversy, and believing that he had been guided for the best. His success in all he undertook came rapidly, and at the Bar and in Parliament he speedily made his mark. He never had to feel the stress of money difficulties, and he passed his life in a much-loved home, surrounded by children of whom I am proud to record his testimony that 'they never caused him any anxiety.' If I may thankfully note that the annals of the family give no instance of a black sheep, or an unhappy marriage, it must be ascribed to the sacred influence of home, and the teaching and example of the best of fathers and mothers. As each son or daughter married, the wife or husband was at once adopted whole-heartedly into the family circle, and the whole tribe gathered every Christmas round their head till, as time went on, a third and fourth generation scrambled on his knees. He enjoyed almost unbroken good health almost to the last, and had a strength of body and mind which enabled him to throw himself into all his occupations and amusements with intense zest and relish. An entry in his diary describes a meeting with Mrs. Gladstone at Lambeth in 1885, when she told him the secret of her husband's health and strength :

'At twenty-two he vowed he would not be put out at failure, doing his best, would never think in bed of subjects on his mind, and he has always had a good conscience.'

My father shared with his great political antagonist this invaluable power of devoting himself to one subject at a time, and of throwing off his cares when in bed. When he held the high offices of Home Secretary, War Minister, and Secretary of State for India, his tenure of office on each occasion came in most anxious times, but through the Fenian plots and risings, when his life was hourly threatened, when the Eastern question threatened war, and when Afghanistan was in a blaze, his calmness and courage never deserted him, and he was able to enjoy peaceful and unbroken

slumber every night. A priceless blessing indeed! What would not most of us give for the power to keep a vow not to think in bed of subjects on the mind?

Third in Macbeth's list of all that should accompany old age comes obedience, and that he enjoyed to the full. We children might ask my mother the reason of an order, but my father's will was a law from which there was no appeal. 'Father says so, and that is enough,' was my mother's firm but gentle answer, and we soon learnt to realise that his commands were always founded upon good grounds, although the reasons for them had to be taken for granted. Children enjoy more liberty now, but early lessons of unquestioning and absolute obedience have their advantages, and I am not quite clear that the fourth commandment holds its legitimate place in this twentieth century.

The obedience my father exacted from his children he gave in no stinted measure where he thought it due. He had a great reverence for the law, and it would have taken a great deal to convince him of the necessity of resistance, either active or passive. He taught us that to smuggle or evade a tax or duty was to rob the State, and that to incur debt without an immediate prospect of being able to pay it was to steal from the individual. He would never bring home a Tauchnitz novel from the Continent, as he considered that to do so was to commit a fraud on the owner of the copyright. When he hired a chair on a sunny day in the park, he always deposited his penny on the seat if he went away before the collector had made his round. I may illustrate his almost exaggerated respect for law and order by an incident which dates from my nursery days. One morning our nurse brought back from the Serpentine to our house in Eaton Square a tiny, fluffy, baby duck. She put it into a foot tub, where it swam about to our huge delight; but our pleasure in our novel toy did not last long! My father heard of the 'theft' and spoke more sternly to the culprit than on any occasion before or since. The duck was public property, and she had rendered herself liable to condign punishment, perhaps imprisonment. The culprit, with many tears, put the *corpus delicti* back in the basket, and, casting sidelong glances behind her for policemen or park-keepers, carried it back to Hyde Park, where I hope it found its bereaved parents. That beloved nurse ended her days as a pensioner at Hemsted, where, like her master, she passed her ninetieth year, and I cannot remember any subsequent occasion when she heard a hard word

from his lips. He always paid her a visit every Sunday on his way to church.

He was very methodical and punctual in his habits. He was always seated at his writing-table as the clock struck eight, and got through much of his heavy correspondence between that hour and nine, when he read family prayers. No late hours prevented him from being down to the moment, and he got his full hour even in London in spite of late sittings of the House and social engagements. He never worked at night, and when in the country was nearly always in bed by eleven o'clock. Although his diary and accounts were kept in perfect order, it was rather an arduous task to read and arrange the enormous number of letters he preserved. When I was sorting the contents of the five large tin deed-boxes which contained them, it was touching to find early round-hand efforts of myself and my brothers and sisters mixed up with the confidential letters of his royal mistress and the great statesmen of the age. I could see what small things were important in his eyes, for this salvage, fortunately, did not comprise all our weekly letters, but only the milestones of our careers: first letters from school, our confessions of failure, and our boasts of our small successes. Every birthday and every anniversary of importance had also their comment in the diary, like that of February 27, 1845, when I made my first appearance:

'I did not expect a boy, but he is welcome, poor little fellow, and may God bless him and his mother, and may they never want the bite or the sup.'

Similar records of every event of importance in my life and that of my brothers and sisters recur up to the very last page when he laid down his pen in January 1906. On each anniversary of his birth and wedding I find a note of wonder and gratitude at his great and persistent good fortune. One or two specimens may serve as examples. On his tenth wedding day he writes as follows:

'March 29, 1848.—Ten years ago! Ten years of uninterrupted happiness, too great prosperity almost. May it excite our gratitude more and more to the great Giver of all good! But it would be wrong to look forward to another ten years such as we have passed. It may be our lot to enjoy them, but while we are enjoying the present we should be nerving ourselves for what may come.'

Again, on his thirty-sixth birthday:

'October 1, 1850.—Another birthday comes and all around me safe and well as before. Nothing to detract from our happiness and enjoyment. Seldom indeed has so large a family as ours passed through so many years without deeper sorrows than have fallen to our share. Oh, may God give me a thankful heart!'

I pass over forty-five years and come to October 1, 1895:

'Brought safely to this day, and what blessings surround me! what loving greetings salute me! How dear it was to hear little George lisp his "many happy returns"! The dear mother well. What more ought I to ask for?'

One last extract in 1898, when at last the 'dear mother' has been taken from his side:

'My birthday comes round with many loving greetings and messages. One wanting! But I doubt not that prayer goes up for us in the unseen, and the weariness of last year has found the lasting rest.'

That 'dear mother' was always the best and most devoted of wives. With both it was a case of love at first sight, and from the day when the young Gathorne-Hardy, then a lad of twenty, accompanied his college friend Alexander Orr to Holywood, near Belfast, and had the first sight of 'her who was to be the joy of my life,' no shadow of difference ever crossed the mind of either of them. The diaries from 1837 to 1843, in which he recounted 'how he made his vows in somewhat dreary and moony style,' have been destroyed.

'The sooner they pass from sight the better,' but in the summary he made in 1882 he writes:

'How beautiful I thought her! And I have never changed my opinion, although face and form have been the least of her charms for me and her children.'

His father, after a short and natural hesitation, consented, and on March 29, 1838, the young barrister was allowed to carry away his bride and commence housekeeping on an income of about £500 a year. He often told us with a laugh his old nurse's quaint comment on his engagement. 'I hear you are going to marry an Irishwoman! Well, I have always heard that it was a blessed country but a cursed people'; but perhaps that somewhat sweeping criticism could not be properly applied to a girl who, although born in Belfast, was of Scottish race, as her father

was an Orr and her mother a Stewart. The experiment, if hazardous, was eminently successful. Husband and wife were never separated for a single day without exchanging letters, and there was never the shadow of a difference between them. My father's temperament was naturally quick and impetuous, but my mother was ever calm and serene. I still seem to hear her saying in answer to some grumble or complaint of my own, 'Don't fuss; it will be sure to come right'; and she had no touch of selfishness; her every thought was for others, above all for her husband and children. She excelled as a hostess, housekeeper, and manager, and spared the breadwinner all trouble over domestic details. Like my father, she had a musical and sympathetic voice, and read aloud most beautifully. We were but tiny tots when I first remember forming one of a circle lying round her on our backs after the midday meal and listening entranced to 'The Lady of the Lake' and 'Marmion.' She trained our memories as children by a practice which she adopted at our morning reading of the Bible. We were never allowed to mark the place where we left off, and there was a rivalry between us which could first recall the concluding incident of last day's passage.

Scott was always a family hero, and my father never wavered in his allegiance to the magician who published *Waverley* during the year of his birth, and he cherished the memory of the glimpse he had of him, limping and white-headed, during a visit which he paid to Edinburgh with his father in 1825. There was a censorship of the books we were allowed to read, but all Scott, all Shakespeare, and the 'Arabian Nights' in Lane's version were always permitted. It was a joy to hear my father read out either prose or poetry, and I was thus first introduced to Wordsworth, Tennyson, Longfellow, and many others. His reading and retentive memory never left him at a loss for an apt illustration. I may instance the occasion when his speech in the House of Commons was interrupted and attention diverted by the passage of a cat when he recalled how the Synod of Dort was disturbed by an owl. He sang well, and was fond of taking a part in the catches and part-songs which were the vogue in early Victorian days. Many of his old songs, such as 'The Dog's-meat Man,' 'John Brown the Black Man,' the 'Cork Leg,' and 'Guy Fawkes,' I think I could almost repeat verbatim, although it must be sixty years since I heard them. I was an imaginative child, and remember still that I used to be rather terrified at the 'Mistletoe Bough' with its tragical conclusion, and the 'Admiral' whose sad end

was foreshadowed by the shark which followed his ship. Some of our favourites must, I think, have been reminiscences of the days of 'Farmer George' handed down from the previous generation. One described how an old Yorkshire farmer was disillusioned by his first sight of royalty :

'Whoy ! Oi've seen a chap at Bartlemy Fair
Much loiker a King than that chap there ;'

and another told of a rustic who pulled out a shilling to pay the King's turnpike fare, and when

'The monarch, to keep up the joke,
Ordered five pounds to be paid down,'

went away muttering,

'If oi'd have known he'd been so rich
Oi wouldn't have given the King that shilling.'

I should like to trace and recover these queer old songs if any reader happens to know them.

My mother in those early days used also to sing very sweetly, Moore's Irish melodies, and Jacobite songs such as 'Wha wadna fecht for Charlie?' being among her favourites. I still possess an old marble-covered book in which the music and words of some hundred of her favourite songs were copied in her exquisitely neat pointed handwriting, between 1836 and 1838. The once fashionable compositions of Haynes Bayly recur frequently, but specimens of the work of Beethoven and Bishop are also to be found. The box in which I found this book also contained many copies of original verses addressed by my father to his beloved partner on birthdays and wedding days. His was always the pen of a ready writer, and some of his political squibs were published in *Blackwood* and other periodicals. Such compositions, even when by the hands of such masters as Moore and Praed, usually lose their point very soon after the occasion which called them forth, but I think I may give one sample of my father's skill which still applies to present-day conditions :

'WHIP AND ECHO.

'I've tried by every shift and sleight
To make the Baronet vote right.
How shall I best, by hope or fear,
Among the "Ayes" make him appear ?
Echo. Make him a peer !'

Paper games, in which he took a leading part, were a favourite holiday amusement. Some of these needed a certain facility in the composition of satirical epigram. We all acquired some skill by practice, but my father was always *facile princeps*. His paper was always the first to be folded and handed in, and he generally had time to assist any hopelessly puzzled player. I may also record, at the risk of shocking the 'Band of Hope,' that when his small children were allowed down to dessert they were given a sip of wine to drink the toast of 'Church and Queen.'

My father always loved fresh air and exercise, and if I dwell at some length upon his long career as a sportsman, I do so because I believe that his magnificent health and strength were largely due to the interest he always took in shooting, and to the long days he spent in the open air, tramping over the heavy Kent clay after the wild September partridges, or covert shooting in the great woods with an eagerness and a zest exceeding that of the youngest of the fortunate guests who shared with him the abundant sport always found at Hemsted. In fact he was almost too eager, and even during his ninth decade, when the start had been fixed for half-past ten, the young men smoking their morning cigarettes in the billiard-room would generally see through the window the form of their host striding across the park ten minutes in advance of the time appointed. Keen as he always was to find sport for his guests, there is no denying that he also liked to have plenty of shooting to his own gun, and felt and showed disappointment when he did not get his full share. He was not a jealous shot, and had been trained from childhood to consider it a crime to shoot another man's bird, but he certainly was not at all pleased if any one happened to shoot his!

A snapshot portrait of him taken by my youngest son in December 1901, an enlargement of which is reproduced in the second volume of his 'Life,' affords by far the most satisfactory presentment of his appearance during his later years. He is represented seated on his shooting-stick, comfortably dressed in an old loose knickerbocker suit, before a background of slender birch-stems dappled with the lights and shades of the afternoon sun. A smile of measureless content lights up

'The busy wrinkles round his eyes.'

During the Christmas holidays of that year he was able to shoot four or five times a week, and it was only occasionally that we

persuaded him to make a late start, or to retire before the last beat was over. He was still able to account for forty or fifty pheasants at a hot corner, seldom missing an easy bird. He was always a good shot, but not remarkably accurate at the very tall birds which it is the pride of game preservers to show in these days. His training was in the methods of an earlier school when beats were not so long, and the object of the host and his keepers was to show and bag the birds reared. He did not despise October pheasants, and nearly all his birthdays were spent at the covert-side. The entry in his diary for October 1901 shows how he enjoyed himself when eighty-seven years of age :

'October 2, 1901.—The sport of the day was not good, but I enjoyed being out, and was really not much tired, although the early start at 10.15 was not followed by an early return, as it was nearly four when I got back.'

He had an attack of phlebitis in the spring of the following year, and was not able to mount a horse until September 26, when he 'had his first ride after many months and enjoyed it.' For once his birthday gives no record of shooting, but on October 2 he testifies to 'a buoyancy almost youthful.' Towards the close of the year he was able to use his beloved guns again, and enjoyed many half-days with the Christmas family party. His name appears in the game book for the last time on January 27, 1903.

This long career of sport must be something like a record. I believe that the first Lord Eversley, who had so distinguished a career as Speaker of the House of Commons when Mr. Shaw-Lefevre, shot pheasants at an even greater age, but only brought out his gun for a few minutes at the home beat. There is a pleasant story of another nonagenarian, the sixth Lord Albemarle, who on coming out in the same way, wearing an old-fashioned top hat, was bonneted by a falling bird shot by his son, Lord Bury, then nearly sixty years of age. It is said that when the old gentleman succeeded in extricating himself he called out, spluttering with rage, 'Bury, my boy! you did that on purpose; give up your gun and go home,' and that the mature 'boy' obeyed the order with good grace. But such rare and casual appearances at the covert-side afford no comparison with my father's long and enjoyable days in the field, continued till almost the end of his ninth decade.

What revolutions he saw in his favourite sport! He began

with a flint-and-steel, and rang the changes through a succession of improvements, through percussion muzzle-loaders, pin-fire breech-loaders, central fires, and smokeless powder, to the latest pattern of hammerless ejector. He bought a pair of new guns in August 1887, when well on the wrong side of seventy. Records of sport occur again and again in his diaries. An entry in October 1847 vividly recalls some of the dangers and difficulties of the old days of muzzle-loaders, and incidentally the early start sportsmen were then ready to make. Denaby Wood, the scene of the incident, is now a centre of the West Yorkshire coalfields :

'On Friday off at 7.30 to Thrybergh. Out shooting with John and Charles in Denaby Wood, on the way to which I killed a woodcock, and in which I slew a hare with my ramrod, and rather injured my gun. It was a stupid trick after firing it off once before this season! Such a moon! Poachers may rejoice at it. By the way, I was after one to-day, which proved to be a cow, which in its course through the plantation let off a maroon, and drew me to the spot in the belief that I was going to catch some one.'

In 1849, at the Hermitage, near Woking, a small place which he took for the Vacation, he was out snipe shooting on August 1, and reports, 'There will be plenty of snipe shooting, if nothing else.' He deplores a headache on Sunday, August 19, and 'doubts his fitness for black-game shooting to-morrow.' However, next day he went out early, but 'had no shots, though I saw one blackcock.'

Probably the scene of his exploits is now a portion of some cemetery or golf-course.

All through the early 'fifties he was often the guest of his cousin, William Moore, at Grimeshill, Kirkby Lonsdale, where he served his apprenticeship to grouse shooting, of which he afterwards became an ardent votary. The birds were very wild, and in those days there was no driving. The sportsmen at Grimeshill used to go out alone, and there was much emulation as to which brought back the best bag. My father used to take his own dogs with him, and I can just remember Mab and Morpheus, a handsome pair of liver-and-white pointers. Their untimely fate probably served to fix them in my memory. Morpheus, when tied up in a stall in the stables, jumped over the partition and hanged himself! Mab died while endeavouring to rear an enormous litter of more than a dozen puppies. My father always loved the heather, and

was a frequent and welcome guest at many moors in the Highlands, notably with his dear friend and colleague in many Administrations, the Duke of Richmond. He rented many grouse moors himself.

He always adhered to the rule which he impressed upon his sons, that no bird ought to be shot at unless it was either destructive or good for food. Pigeon shooting he detested, and as early as 1845, when he went to the Red House to try a new gun by Lancaster, he notes: 'Some first-rate shooting, but it is sad butchery.' In 1903, when his gun had at last been laid aside, he was still able to interest himself in a nest of brown owls hung up by the coops of young pheasants, and gave directions that the food brought to them by their parents should be noted and recorded.

'July 6, 1903.—Oliver sends in a night's food brought by the parents for the young owls—two rats, thirteen mice, one sparrow! What benefactors!'

The record of his long career throws a side-light upon the gradual growth of the bags, a somewhat doubtful benefit. In 1863 he writes of the 'wonderful sport at Loyds! 327 head, of which 236 were pheasants!' Ten years later far more numerous bags were obtained everywhere without exciting wonder.

He was fond of stalking, but was never much of a performer with the rifle. The magnificent scenery and hard work appealed to him, and from 1867, when he records his first stalk at Balmoral on the day which brought the news of the Manchester rescue, until 1878, when he describes four consecutive days on the steep mountains which encircle beautiful Braemore, then the seat of his friend Sir John Fowler, the great engineer, he availed himself of every opportunity which offered for enjoying the sport. His misses as well as his successes are put down with never-failing surprise, so he may as well have credit for the Royal which fell to his rifle at Balmoral in 1875, when the occasion was celebrated by a torchlight dance of gillies and foresters. In September 1878, although he expresses a doubt 'whether I am wise in undertaking so great a fatigue in climbing up and shaking down,' he perseveres energetically and is out on five consecutive days, on the last of which he 'failed to get the poorish stag which alone we saw, and for whose rising I sat an hour and a half in an exceedingly wet peat moss and was duly soaked.' He adds:

'I think old age is getting hold of me, for I am not excited or nervous, and do not think the stag's neighbourhood moves a pulse.'

But there was 'life in the old dog yet' for many a long day, and his light springy step over moor and moss was the envy of many of his juniors up to a much later date. In September 1888, when he revisited Balmoral, 'so light was the air and so tempting the aspect of things that I left my carriage and walked the five miles without any fatigue.' When he was long past eighty I often accompanied him in walks right round the Serpentine.

He was a keen salmon fisher, and enjoyed many good days with the Duke of Richmond on the Spey near Gordon Castle, and with his son-in-law, Henry Graham, on the Tay at Murthly. He was never an adept, and his greatest successes were obtained harling. He never attempted the difficult art of dry-fly fishing for trout, and did not despise angling for coarse fish. The last fishing incident recorded in his diary appears in August 1885, when he was tenant of Strathgarve in Ross-shire. It is sufficiently remarkable to be quoted :

'August 28, 1885.—I determined after breakfast to make a tour of the loch, as there was a good breeze and cloud. C. G. (my brother Gathorne) hooked a fair pike with his natural bait and bagged it. Then I was favoured, and clearly had a large fish on, but my line suddenly slackened and I fancied he was off, but immediately after both C. G.'s line and mine were run away with by the same fish, and he made a gallant fight. We brought him, almost lifeless, to the edge of the boat at last, and saw he was some ten or twelve pounds weight at least, and far too large for the landing net, which, however, Tolmie (the keeper) tried, as he seemed quite done. Alas ! he struck our hooks out, and though the fish lay long enough on the water for us to back the boat, we could not get hold. The adventure was strange, and made us laugh heartily.'

In his two last years, when his matchless strength and vigour had at length become unequal to the exertion of shooting, my father returned to 'the contemplative man's recreation,' and loved to sit by the corner of the Bay Pond and fish with float and worm for the carp and tench which abounded in the somewhat muddy water. The gardeners, under orders from my sisters, always happened to be sweeping, or otherwise occupied, close at hand, but he was never allowed to know that he was being watched or attended. It was the last form of sport he was able to enjoy, and he pursued it to within a few months of his death.

He was always a keen rider, and was to be found in Rotten Row every morning when in London, and knew well all the roads for miles round his country home. Hemsted provided no

opportunity for fox-hunting, but I can just remember his following Lord Leconfield's hounds when at Blackdown in the 'fifties. I think his last appearance in the hunting field was at a lawn meet at Hatfield in February 1879, when he took the field, 'in very unsportsmanlike attire, not made more comfortable by a fidgety, high-stepping horse. The day delightful; my nearly two hours' ride did me good.'

Racing did not appeal to him, and he detested the betting and gambling element which seems inseparable from the Turf. He never betted, played cards for money, or speculated. He had an old-fashioned horror of smoking, and it was only by degrees that the family won their way to having cigars and pipes permitted in the billiard-room. We made a gradual advance from the tower to the gun-room, and thence to the business-room, before we obtained this privilege. At last he reluctantly acquiesced in the modern innovation of a cigarette in the dining-room after dinner, but it was only his strong sense of hospitality which made him tolerate a habit which he greatly disliked. He was almost as great a tobacco hater as his Royal mistress, Queen Victoria, of whom he used to quote the experience of one of his early visits to Balmoral, when a foreign guest, I believe Prince Christian, could only satisfy his craving for tobacco by having the bars removed from his bedroom grate, putting his head on a pillow on the hearthstone, and puffing up the chimney. His temper was by nature impetuous and hasty, but he learnt to keep it well under control. During all his long life no one ever heard an oath or a coarse word pass his lips. In his early diaries occur frequent and disgusted references to the Rabelaisian sallies which marred his enjoyment of the humour of the leaders of the Bar on Grand Day on the Northern Circuit in the 'forties. Fun and real humour he always loved and enjoyed, and he was the most appreciative and inspiring of the audience, and led the applause, at the village concerts at the St. George's Club which he built and presented to the parishioners of Benenden, and at the private theatricals which annually formed a part of the Christmas festivities at Hemsted. But I must conclude my imperfect portrait of this representative of the old school. Most of the political controversies in which he took a leading part are well-nigh forgotten, but the influence of his home life still remains.

GUEST NIGHT.

TO-NIGHT it will be guest night, but there will be no guests. We officers will dine alone, and when the word is passed 'Lights out,' and the last chorus is sung, the commission of H.M.S. *Somerset* will be over, and many friends will close a four years' comradeship. There will be the usual business, laughter and wine, dancing and song; it will be a little overdone, I expect, for it takes more than a chanty to drown the memory of a bursting shell or the wreck of a shattered casemate. The muster will be incomplete too, since for three of our number the 'Last post' sounded ten thousand miles away, off Sei Cho in the South Pacific.

Memories of some other guest nights come back to me; the first Saturday night at sea when we officers, newly joined, strangers to each other, drank, according to old custom, to the health of sweet-hearts and wives, whilst the Eddystone blinked ironical farewells; a sweltering day in Aden Road when the punkah broke and we finished the meal in kimonos; a typhoon night at Nagasaki and the mess-room cleared in a moment; and, lastly, I recall that evening in the China Seas when we were homeward bound.

We had left the 'flag' and the fleet five hundred miles astern, and scarcely thought to see a mast stouter than that of a coasting junk, or of the larger sampans trawling on the banks; but as we swung round Hoi Chow point and steadied for the anchorage, the armoured tops of a foreign man-of-war were sighted in the roadstead, and in a moment we recognised the squat ugly hull of the *Zenda* swinging sleepily in the bay.

The *Zenda* was an old friend of ours, for we had saluted each other in most of the Pacific ports from Vladivostock to Saigon, and never, I think, was a foreign ship better officered than she. Ward-room nicknames were common property between us, and mess stories had been shared at many a late evening; they were excellent fellows, all of them. Of course they would dine with us and say 'good-bye,' and indeed, as our anchor thundered down, the semaphore was spelling out the invitation.

I spent the day tramping the marshes after snipe with Kritzler,

their navigator, and, since he was as good a shot as he was a companion, we stayed till dusk for the fighting teal.

* * * * *
Three rings of a bell, one word from the midshipman in charge, and a rush of broken water as the pinnace went astern announced that the '*Zendas*' were alongside. The officer of the watch placed his telescope under his left arm and nodded to the quartermaster, and every soul on deck came to the salute as the boatswain's pipe broke the silence of the ship with its long-drawn haunting wail of the olden days.

For a moment we were all king's officers, as one by one our guests stepped on to the quarter-deck with the sharp movement of the military salute. It was not merely the formal greeting of host and guest, for we were brothers of the sea paying homage to our ships, fellow wanderers of the world saluting our nation's pride, but as the dark boat-cloaks of the foreigners were slipped from their shoulders, showing the white and gold of many uniforms, formality disappeared and we were just old friends, friends of the East, friends in our common calling. We were dining on deck, for there were forty of us and the night was airless, so it made a brave scene as we stood for the moment silent at the long table; the coloured lights under a coloured awning, splashes of scarlet of draped ensigns, the red reflections on the gold and silver of mess trophies and on the burnished muzzles of the turret guns; and in contrast to the two rows of white mess jackets one noticed the sky-blue robes of the Chinese mess boys. Somewhere forward the band was playing the 'officers' grace,' the 'Roast Beef of Old England.'

Dinner went gaily along and conversation was not difficult, for if our own languages were insufficient, there was the slang of half a dozen Eastern tongues to fall back upon, and even the music of the orchestra was indistinct in the laughter and talk and the clink of glasses. Once I distinguished the barking cracks of the 'wireless' as we answered some distant call from space; it was Singapore perhaps passing the day's news from home, or a destroyer asking for typhoon reports from out at sea, or more probably it was some question from Hong Kong; but my neighbour was explaining in broken English his criticisms on Norman Angell and European affairs, and the band and the wireless were forgotten. We courteously readjusted the balance of power in Europe, I

remember, and with a laugh broke alliances and formed new ones across the dinner-table.

But dinner was over at last, and the table was clear save for the crimson lines of brimming glasses, and as the decanters reached the table-ends the talk lessened, and, with two sharp raps of the president's hammer, died away.

'Mister Vice! the King!' and in a moment we were on our feet. Then from the other end of the table came the echo:

'Gentlemen! the King!' and to the tune of the anthem forty glasses were lifted to the toast.

Glasses were drained and filled again, and once more the captain was on his feet—but he waited glass in hand, for the silence had been broken. Every eye was turned on the signal boatswain hurrying aft along the quarter-deck; but as he handed the signal our gaze shifted to the captain, and even the bandmaster, waiting baton uplifted for his cue, looked over his shoulder for the cause of the prolonged silence. There can have been no one, I think, who did not notice the annoyance in the captain's expression—it was idiotic of the signal boatswain not to have waited—but I doubt if many of us read much in the hint of a smile that came over his face as he folded the paper and lifted his glass again.

'Gentlemen, I give you the health of the Emperor!' and our cheers rang out over the bay, and were echoed back from the cliffs.

I have said that few read much in the captain's expression, but I was sitting close to him, and noticed, whilst his eyes followed the lines of the signal, a slight squaring of the shoulders, as if some single word had arrested his attention, an instinctive, almost imperceptible movement, and then he had smilingly given us the toast.

Cigars were soon alight, liqueurs chosen, and chairs pushed half back from the table, as we broke up into little groups of three or four and told of our day's shooting, and the latest stories from the Hong Kong Club. It was strange talk. I heard messages of farewell to the little Japanese ladies exchanged with insulting greetings for the gem merchants of Ceylon; I heard invitations to impossible future meetings, and the re-telling of mutual adventures of the past, and through it all ran the common longing for a western course, the common friendship of a distant station.

Away in Europe men quarrelled over their nation's rivalries, and nervously compared the broadsides of the Pacific fleets. On

the quarter-deck of a man-of-war we officers could meet on common ground as keen players in a splendid game.

Our twenty guests had drunk to our homeward voyage, and had broken suddenly into their 'war cry,' a full-throated guttural chorus, so we looked for the senior engineer to reply in one of his Irish speeches for which he was famous in every mess-room on the station.

But the 'senior' had left the quarter-deck; no doubt he had gone below to see that all was well in the engine-room—for we were lying to an open anchorage and the fires were banked—and in his place we named the stammering paymaster for a song in slang Maltese. Some of us lingered late at the table, and the 'First post' had sounded before the last of us rose and the table itself vanished away.

I was tired and stiff after my day's tramp through the marshes, and I had no wish to join in the dancing that I knew would follow, so I strolled forward and up to the after-bridge. The band was playing on the starboard side of the shelter deck, so I stayed to port and looked across the bay to windward to where the *Zenda* lay, the reflector of her foremost searchlight catching the rays of the rising moon, and throwing a cold beam on the long ram bows. She had started to swing and seemed but a cable from us.

It was a very popular waltz that the band was playing, and I leant over the foremost rails, and looked forward up the long badly lit battery of the ship's waist. As I expected, the lower deck was profiting by the music, for a hundred phantoms seemed to be gliding forward into the utter darkness under the beams and aft again below me. Occasionally a pair of silhouettes would take form as they wheeled round an ammunition hoist, or sheered clear of a twelve-pounder gun mounting into the glare of a bulkhead light. The 'hands' were dancing slowly and very quietly.

One had but to turn round to see, on the other side of the armoured screen, the quarter-deck flooded in light and colour. There the two captains had started the dance, and soon everyone was swinging around the deck. The laughter and talk and the noise of gliding feet came up to me in one steady flow of sound, that mingled and gradually lost itself in the nearer music of the waltz, for the band was playing louder than usual, and it was playing too fast. Harsher and more predominating became the waltz, till the dancers seemed but figures in pantomime. Louder and yet louder grew

the music. It was absurd; the air was being ruined, and yet the bandmaster seemed to be calling on his men for a greater and greater volume of sound, as he made frantic appeals with his baton. I swung impatiently round and made to leave the bridge, but I got no further than the ladder, for, as I passed the closed door of the telegraph office, I heard the explosive shriek of the 'wireless,' and I stopped. For a while I listened to see if I could read the signal, but the band was thundering out the bars as if in defiance of the transmitter, and it was only an occasional letter that I could distinguish. Once, however, a breath of wind drifted the music out to sea, and I caught a succession of misspelled words, but it was not in English that the message was being sent, it was to the *Zenda* that we were talking. But why, in the name of heaven, were we signalling a foreign cruiser, a bare two cables distant, with high-power wireless? It was unusual, very unusual, I was thinking, when the band crashed out the closing bars of the waltz, the wireless stopped in the middle of a word, and a peal of laughter came rippling up from the quarter-deck. Thoughts of that first message, the half-completed word, and that weird crescendo of the dance, floated disconnected in my mind till, at the very moment when the door of the signal house was shot back from inside, one memory—the memory of the captain's smile—seemed suddenly to link them into a suspicion. A signalman, sweating from the close heat of the little office, stepped out. 'A signal for you to see, sir!' and there under my eyes were the written words of my surmise:

'Imminent' . . . War was imminent . . . 'War.'

This was no grand manœuvre signal, practice was over; it was the real thing at last—that was what was so hard to realise.

Good God! So all the work of all our lives was to be put to the only test, to-night perhaps; and then, long seconds after I had recalled some trifling defect in the turret which I should command, I realised that there below me, dancing and unknowing, were our enemies, and over the water I heard the quartermaster of the *Zenda* piping down. I understood now the meaning of that smile, for I, too, found myself laughing aloud—laughing not from mirth but from the excitement, the unreality and the grimness of the situation. I realised, too, the purport of that crashing waltz and the strange message across the water: the signal must have come through uncoded from some station up the coast, and we were drowning the *Zenda's* receiver from close quarters, stopping her ears with polite nonsense whilst

rumours of war floated about space; and the band had silenced the suspicions of our guests. There was an uncanny humour in it all. I could imagine an excited foreign wireless operator in the north, sitting in his little cabinet, frantically calling across China the news of the coming storm. And there would be no answer from the *Zenda*, for an unsuspecting telegraphist was listening with mystified amusement to a long and stupid signal screamed out by an English cruiser, silencing the distant warning.

I could picture, too, the scene in our own boiler-rooms, the half-naked stokers, framed in the white glare of an open furnace door, raking, shovelling, sweating as the needle of the steam gauge slowly rose to the mounting steam.

Yes, our game was clear now. Our goal was the fleet five hundred miles away, and that goal we must reach unshadowed by the *Zenda*. One hour more and the day would die, and we should be steaming 'all out' to join the flag, whilst the *Zenda* still lay wondering, impotent, in Hoi Chow Bay—if it was peace. She would be lying a crippled wreck—if it was war, for, once we were under way, the anchored enemy would be at the mercy of our torpedoes.

The rest of that evening comes back to me rather as a dream, a series of pictures broken by one ever-recurring thought. Some one was playing a piano, right aft under the ensign staff, and a little crowd was shouting the verses of 'Rolling Home.' I saw the first lieutenant saunter forward; I heard the pipe, and an order passed along the decks, quietly though, almost whisperingly, from mouth to mouth, and the sound of bare feet on the fo'c'sle ladder. So the cable was to be 'brought to.' I remember that I joined a laughing party round the after-capstan where our guests had opened a rolling chanty, and were chorusing it with chorus. War imminent, and these were our foes! Kritzler, my friend of the morning's shoot, was leading the song, and I noticed my companion of the dinner-table, who had been so emphatic on the impossibility of war, leaning against one of the turret guns; the lyddite shell would be fused by daylight perhaps, and the tompons would be out.

Then much later, I recollect, drinks were going round, and we were singing the songs that every mess knows; laughter was getting louder and dancers wilder, when a deep voice in the gangway hailed the *Zenda's* steamboat across the water, and I heard the wireless again for a moment bark out its brief acknowledgment of a distant call. The band struck up the last song, and in a second

or so five-and-thirty of us were swinging, hands grasped, round the after-turret, shouting 'For Auld Lang Syne.' It was a gay farewell, for, of course, we were homeward bound, and we had been good friends, we and the *Zenda*.

The last chorus had died away, and we had gathered round the starboard gangway by the time that the pinnacle was alongside; but scarcely had the boat lost her way, when an officer, wearing his sword, jumped from the stern sheets on to the foot of the ladder, and, striding on to the quarter-deck, without a word, without even a salute, handed a crumpled paper to his captain.

So the news was through.

The captain of the *Zenda* read, turned, and spoke one hurried sentence to his officers.

Every smile died away, not a word was said, but by some common instinct we all came to the salute, and for a moment stood there facing each other silently—silently at least save for the rising and falling notes of the piping of the side.

One by one our guests turned and filed down the ladder, an order passed, and we stood watching the bow light of the pinnacle swinging over to starboard. Then the red light eclipsed as the boat cleared the gangway, and with our eyes we followed the vanishing phosphorescent line of the boat's wake. I felt the trembling of the ship's hull and knew that the cable was coming home, and that we were weighing anchor. Still no one moved.

Suddenly the captain spoke, sharply, almost angrily: 'Drummer'—and we waited for the word.

'Sound off "Action,"' and as the last long notes of the call died away, I heard the sound of many hundreds of men closing up to their posts.

H. C. ARNOLD-FORSTER.

RUGBY IN THE 'SEVENTIES.

'NARRATIONS of the greatest actions of other people,' writes Horace Walpole¹ from Cambridge to another concerning 'The Triple Alliance,' 'are tedious in comparison with the serious trifles that every man can call to mind of himself, while he was learning these histories. Youthful passages of life are the clippings of Pitt's Diamond, set into little heart-rings with mottoes; the stone itself less worth, the filings more gentle and agreeable. Little intrigues, little schemes and policies engage their thoughts; and, at the same time that they are laying the foundation of the middle age of life, the mimic republic they live in furnishes material of conversation for their later age; and old men cannot be said to be children a second time with greater truth from any one cause than their living over again their childhood in imagination.'

Nevertheless, the path of literature is strewn with failures to revive these memories of universal interest. 'Tom Brown's School Days,' 'Dick,' and 'A Day of my Life at Eton' stand by themselves as descriptions of schoolboy life, and two of these are by Old Rugbeians. It would seem that, although a great school is a microcosm of the larger world, the puppets take themselves so seriously, and change their parts with such bewildering frequency, that few grown men can do them justice. Cant puts another difficulty in the way of truthful description, because it is so much the fashion to tell boys that their school days are the happiest they will ever know, that it almost argues a defect in nature to suggest the contrary. Yet a public school is not a nursing-mother to all boys, and not a few find their greatest happiness in the freedom of a University. A man, however, must be dull indeed who does not feel, through all his life, the influence of a great school, and is not to be envied if he cannot say, with confidence and truthfully, that his own was the best of all.

Whoever writes of Rugby owes it as a pious duty to the Founder to begin with an account of 'The Town,' because the good old grocer, Laurence Sheriffe, who endowed the School in 1567 with his London lands, intended it for the instruction of the children of his native place. In furtherance of this purpose, boys, whose parents had lived for more than two years in the neighbourhood

¹ Letter to George Montagu, May 1, 1736.

of the School were entitled to go 'on the foundation' at a fee of £14 a year, which was remitted to any who obtained a scholarship. The little market town became, in consequence, a favourite resort of educated persons of small means—retired officers, widows of professional men, and such like—who could not afford to send their sons into a Boarding House. In the early sixties, *ducibus* Bucknill and the Haslams, 'The Town' were strong enough to play and beat the rest of the School in cricket and football, and won respect accordingly. But at the end of this period it became known that the Charity Commissioners were preparing a scheme which would take away the privilege of residents; and as, in consequence, very few newcomers took the place of those who left, 'The Town' dwindled to an insignificant handful, who, unable, owing to their small numbers, to provide games for themselves, and excluded by the rigid law of schoolboy etiquette from sharing in the games of any other 'House,' lived in despised isolation outside the main stream of school life. This is all altered now; and 'The Town' is brigaded with one of the smaller Houses for games and purposes of discipline. But in the 'seventies its members formed a pariah class. They were not bullied—this would have given a welcome opportunity for retaliation; and besides, bullying, like fighting,¹ was bad form during my time at Rugby—but regarded as unpleasant vermin and kept outside the main stream of school life. Boys, individually, may be right enough; but boys in the lump are fiends. 'Town' boys, in my time, never had the chance of 'imbibing that most fruitful of all school experiences, the sense of unity and fellowship with people whom one hardly knew.'²

Each of the 'Houses'—of which, in the 'seventies, there were nine—had its distinctive tone and customs, and there was very little intercourse between them. No one, for instance, ever entered another House unless he were an invited guest to some such solemn function as a House supper. Now, I believe, there is no more social separation between the Houses than, between members of different Colleges. Each House, however, still has its own games, and there

¹ During the seven years I was at Rugby (1870-7) there was only one fight, which was regarded as being as much of an anachronism as a duel. It was watched with merriment by half the School, and the two combatants never heard the last of their exploit. 'Hacking' at football served, instead, as a relief for over-charged feelings.

² *Dick*, by G. F. Bradby. This is an account of a Rugby boy's midsummer holiday, which is as good, in its way, as that classic of Rugby, *Tom Brown's School Days*. Is it a mere coincidence that, if one except *A Day of my Life at Eton*, the only two books which give a faithful picture of school life should have been written by Old Rugbeians?

is great rivalry between them. Usually, the 'Cock House'—i.e. the one which is best at football—has the best tone; and this distinction often survives the waning of its prowess. Up to 1875 football was played in the traditional fashion described in 'Tom Brown's School Days.' The players were twenty a side, of whom four were behind the scrummage,—two Half and two Full Backs. The Half-Backs stood ten or fifteen yards behind the scrummage; and, if the ball got behind the goal, all the non-players on the side could take part in the game. It is, I believe, still an undecided point as to who first introduced the distinctive feature of Rugby football by running with the ball. There is no such uncertainty as to the name of the innovator who changed the Rugby game into its present form. In 1874 or 1875 one Clarke, who played Half-Back for Hutchinson's House, came up to the edge of the scrummage and instructed the Forwards to 'furl' the ball to him on every possible occasion, instead of keeping it ahead of them. The innovation, which proved immediately successful—for Clarke was a very fast runner and active as a cat—was received at first with sibilant condemnation. But the merits of the new style were so obvious that next year every House adopted it; and thus the looser game of the present day, with fifteen players a side and five or six behind the scrummage, gradually established itself. Clarke afterwards met with an accident while playing, which fatally injured his spine.

The only other distinctive Rugby game was 'Housewashing,' which consisted in jumping over Clifton Brook, at increasing widths, until everyone was wetted through. As this sport took place in February and March, at a distance of two miles from the School, and as no one but those who had 'got their flannels' at football was allowed to wear anything but duck trousers and a cotton jersey, it is wonderful that deaths from exposure were not frequent. The Steeplechase, which took place during the same term, also over Clifton Brook, was another great test of endurance. The distance was a mile and a half, with jumps about every hundred yards over water or hedges. Sometimes the canal was one of these, and another was always a thick-set hedge twelve feet high, through which a passage had to be forced by the half-naked runners. Boys certainly must have the lives of cats. The most famous of the athletic contests was the 'Crick Run,' which took place on the first Thursday of December. The record for the distance was Bulpett's one hour and seventeen minutes. It has been done also in one hour and eighteen minutes, and in one hour and sixteen minutes;

but in this case the hare, acting on instructions, left all gates open for the winner, which he closed on the runners behind him.

It is unnecessary, perhaps, to add that all games were compulsory except on those who could produce a medical certificate. Loafing is the greatest peril of school life. Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Saturdays were regular half-holidays, and a fourth was added for any School distinction. 'Calling Over' at three o'clock, and in summer also at five o'clock, prevented those who were not playing games from wandering too far afield, although exemption from C.O. could be obtained very easily. In the summer term there were frequent excursions to places of interest in the neighbourhood, or for scientific research in connection with the School 'Natural History Society.' Thus many pleasant hours were spent outside the precincts of the School.

The place of honour having been given to the games of Rugby, as is proper in writing of a public school, something may be said now of its studies. Rugby has never had the tradition of 'scholarships' which hangs around Eton or Shrewsbury. Its *ethos*, implanted by Dr. Arnold and fostered by Dr. Temple, is rather veracity and self-reliance; and 'efficiency' (to use a modern term) is the ideal of its organisation and discipline. The gentler virtues and the arts were little cultivated.¹ Nothing at Rugby, for example, corresponded to the *esprit* and fun of 'College' life at Eton or Winchester; although the School, as a whole, probably gained by the dispersion of its intellectual *élite* among all the Houses. Dean Bradley, indeed, when Master of University, used to say that 'Eton sent up every year to Oxford the thirty best public-school men, but that the rest of the school was sacrificed to produce these.' The epigram need not be taken too literally; but it is certain that Rugby has produced nothing like the Winchester 'Notions,' and that *The Meteor*, although it is now the oldest School magazine, has been always rather a chronicle of School doings than a literary work like *The Etonian*. Whatever Rugby's merits, it was never a 'nest of singing birds,' like that which Dr. Johnson found when he went into residence at Pembroke. Even the school song 'Floreat Rugbeia' was not written until the middle 'sixties. Its author, the Rev. C. E. Moberley, was a very shy man, for whom all had an affection and to whom pupils, who cared to understand him, owe the best of their school training. Aware of his shrinking from publicity, the audience at the School concerts, which were held

¹ I write of a time before the Art Gallery had been built.

at Christmas every year, invariably shouted for 'Mr. Moberley' when his song was sung, until, nervously and with reluctance, he had bowed acknowledgments to his tormentors; and to this day, at Rugby dinners in India and Australia, a toast is drunk in silence to the memory of 'Mr. Moberley,' after 'Floreat' has been sung. Farmer and Bowen of Harrow had not, at that time, shown how great a part music might play in public-school education. 'House-singing,' however, if this may be mentioned in connection with such names, so well described in 'Tom Brown,' was a custom that was still common to all the Houses in the 'seventies, and every new boy had to sing his song or drink a glass of salt and water! There was also keen competition to get into the Chapel Choir, although it must be confessed that this choral zeal did not indicate either a love of music or devotion, but was prompted by the mere mundane desire to escape from 'Form lines' (i.e. a general repetition at the end of each term of the Greek and Latin verse that had been learnt during the term), exemption from which was granted as a compensation for the time occupied by Choir practice.

For teaching purposes there were three schools, the Lower, the Middle, and the Upper. All who were below the Upper School were liable to be 'fagged,' although in practice the Head Form of the Middle School, or 'Upper Middle I.,' was exempt. The ideal 'fag' was an alert errand-boy, a good housemaid, and competent in making toast or grilling sausages; and proficiency in these duties came from experience. Stupidity in their performance might be passed over; but a jibbing spirit was corrected by 'impositions' (i.e. writing out 50 or 100 lines of Latin verse), or, in aggravated cases, by the cane. To-day the spirit of 'Democracy' is grown so high that 'fagging' is become an abomination to the elect, and many would forbid that corporal punishment should be inflicted upon any boy who is below the rank of a duke! Rugby, however, still stands to the ancient ways.

The system of 'Lessons,' which is, I believe, peculiar to Rugby, has the rare merit of cultivating early a sense of responsibility in the use of time. Its basis is the division of the School day into five 'Lessons,' with the provision that no one is to be in any Lesson for more than an hour. 'First' and 'Fifth' Lessons, which were Form Lessons in Classics, were of one hour each, viz. from 7.15 to 8.15 A.M. and from 5 P.M. to 6 P.M. The three other Lessons each extended over two hours and were in 'Sets'—i.e. in

Mathematics, French, or other outside subjects which did not affect promotion, because they were not taken into account in determining the place in a Form. The rule that no one should be in a 'Lesson' for more than an hour gave everyone a good deal of leisure between Lessons. Thus, although Second Lesson was from 9 to 11 A.M., and Third from 11 A.M. to 1 P.M., it was inevitable that everyone had two hours of leisure before one o'clock. If he were in Second Lesson from 9 to 10 A.M. and in Third Lesson from 10 to 11 A.M. he would be free from 11 A.M. to 1 P.M. Or it might be that his leisure had been from 9 to 10 A.M. and 11 to 12 A.M. He was sure, however, of having a few hours at his own disposal every morning.

Theoretically this leisure was intended to be occupied in preparation; but it was easy in two hours to prepare for several days ahead, and the outside subjects, such as Mathematics, did not need to be prepared. Consequently, even the most industrious had time on his hands in which he could occupy himself as he pleased. A system which left a boy so much the master of his own time was clearly open to misuse; and no doubt there was some shirking of all preparation, in blind confidence in the chance that the omission might escape notice in the large classes (twenty to twenty-four in each) which were the rule at Rugby. On the other hand, it was a rare training in self-discipline, and gave everyone an opportunity of following his own bent. In the winter terms he could spend these leisure hours in reading, either in his Study or in the Arnold Library¹; or, it might be, in preparing a paper for one of the School Societies. In summer there was time enough to walk to 'Swift's' or 'Anstey's' for a swim in the river Avon, or to practise at the nets for the House or School Eleven. Many Old Rugbeians owe their best training and their pleasantest recollections to the long and frequent spells between 'Lessons.'

Preparation for 'First Lesson,' which was the most important of the day, was made compulsory in 1875 upon all who were below Upper Middle I., and took place in the hall of each House between 8 and 9 P.M. under the supervision of the Præpostor of the week. All who were above 'Upper Middle II.' prepared for 'First Lesson,'

¹ This was a long room in the quadrangle above the old Writing School, to which a key could be obtained from a master. It contained a rare collection of books on sport and travel, in the best editions; and although novels were not collected, Thackeray and Fielding were both upon the shelves. The monthly magazines were taken in, also *The Times* and some weeklies. Here, too, could the classics be read in that attractive form most useful to a schoolboy vamping a 'construe,' the Delphine editions, bound by Baskerville in olive-green morocco, tooled in gilt.

as for all the others, in their own Studies and in their own way. It was the Study System, indeed, which made possible this independent and undirected Preparation. In the newer Houses everyone had a Study to himself, and was responsible for keeping it in order. In the older Houses two or three juniors shared a Study; but the Sixth and the Seniors had each his own. One of the Sixth lived in each passage and was responsible for its good order, so that everyone could count upon being undisturbed in his own demesne. The Studies were tiny enough (I lived for three years in one which was the exact size and shape of a match billiard-table, and furnished it with cupboard, bookcase, table, fender, and two chairs!), but they were the Englishman's proverbial Home to everyone who lived in them. Sometimes, it is true, the corporate sense of the House would visit with its wrath some fellow who had developed to excess the talent for being inopportune, and then the Sixth would look the other way! But, as a rule, there was no 'ragging,' and everyone could feel secure of privacy in his own Study.

When the Upper School was reached all 'Sets,' except Mathematics, which could not be dropped until one reached the Sixth, were made optional, in order that anyone who liked might concentrate upon his own subject. Most chose Classics, because these counted highest in the Term Examinations for promotion to a higher Form; but wise tutors gave a wide choice to anyone who had a special bent. The lowest Form of the Upper School, the 'Lower Fifth,' was in two Divisions; but the other Forms, the 'Upper Fifth' and the 'Twenty,' were each in one. Thus the Lower Fifth became a great stopper of removes, because it narrowed by one-half the chance of promotion. The Twenty, which, until his resignation last year, has been taught from time immemorial by 'Bobby' Whitelaw, was a sort of jumping-off ground for the Sixth, and included both those who had gone slowly up the School in the hope, too often vain, of spending a term or two in the Sixth, and those who had gone too quickly up it, and won their promotion to the Sixth before they were of the age (sixteen) to enter it. These latter sometimes remained in the Twenty for two years, while their places were being kept in the Sixth. When they reached sixteen they entered the Sixth at the place they could have occupied had they been old enough to enter it at the date of their promotion. For the Sixth never changed places, but was fixed in the order of seniority by entrance. Everyone thus knew, when he entered the Sixth, what his place in the School would be before he left.

No one, who writes of Rugby in the 'seventies, can pass over the unhappy episode of Dr. Hayman's rule. This poor gentleman was appointed Headmaster by the Trustees of the School in the summer of 1870, as a protest against the Radical opinions of Dr. Temple, when the latter was nominated to the Bishopric of Exeter, and had no other qualification for such an onerous succession than his political views. Mr. Henry Sidgwick¹ describes him as 'a well-meaning, vulgar-souled man, who will suit himself as much as he can to the Rugby tone, and very likely do better than he has done at other inferior schools: with plenty of intellectual vigour of an inferior quality: not a humbug, but only what we call "an impostor" at Cambridge, i.e. a second-rate man, who conscientiously thinks himself a first-rate man.' The unrivalled staff of masters whom Dr. Temple had gathered round him, and who accepted their chief's methods and opinions as belonging, in the nature of things, to the Rugby tradition, greatly resented this attempt to undo Dr. Temple's work, and made the error, which exposed them to much criticism, of holding a futile meeting of protest. Indeed, the appointment was regarded as a personal affront by most Old Rugbeians, and protests were made from every quarter by meetings, pamphlets, and letters to *The Times*. When once, however, Dr. Hayman had entered upon his office, the masters, as a body, gave him loyal support. This cannot be said of Mr. Buckle, the Master of the Upper Remove, an oddity who dated from the prehistoric time before Dr. Arnold. This old gentleman—who was very wealthy and dirty—feared no one but his wife, an equally eccentric lady, of whom it is said that she once saluted a visitor with the contents of a bucket of water and apologised by saying that she 'thought it was her Jimmy.' He always chose the book of Esther for our Divinity reading, and never forgave the boy who did not remember that hanging was the fate of Haman! At the end of the term he resigned his mastership.

Dr. Hayman proved, as was anticipated, a great failure in his new office. He was neither learned, sympathetic, nor tactful, and spoke in pompous and ridiculous Latinisms. 'The adjunct of mint sauce to lamb is a direct reflex of the dish of herbs at the Passover,' was a typical passage from a Chapel sermon. 'Put out the lights,' in his speech, became 'Adumbrate the scintillation.' No wonder such a pedagogue commanded little respect. I have seen him hissed out of 'Big School'; and on more than one occasion the School

¹ *Memoirs*, p. 225.

House broke into open rebellion, which was only quelled by sending for a tutor. Naturally under these conditions all *morale* and discipline were lost. At last the Trustees, recognising the significance of the decreasing numbers, yielded to remonstrance and appointed Dr. Jex Blake, the late Dean of Wells, in his place. The change was very judicious, although the times were unfavourable to the success of any new Headmaster. Dr. Jex Blake, indeed, recognised that he was ruling in a time of transition, and will be remembered as laying a foundation for the success of others. A great school, however, is to be judged by its system, which is greater than any Headmaster, and it is of the system of Rugby that I would speak, in the conviction that this cannot be excelled.

The School was governed by the boys, not by the masters, under a quasi-federal system of overlapping aristocracies, working under the restraint of custom and a sense of honour. The 'House' (there were nine Boarding-Houses in my time) was the unit of government, and each stood towards the School, as a whole, in the relation of a federated State to the central Authority. Both the Houses and the School were governed by the members of the Sixth Form ('Præpostors' was their official title); each House by the members of the Sixth who belonged to it, and the School by the Sixth Form as a whole. If it happened that the 'Sixth' in any House was few or weak, the Housemaster might give 'Sixth Power' to some boy of influence lower in the School, or he might invite a Sixth Form 'Town' boy to enter his House and live in it like any other member.

One such case is vivid in my memory. The House into which the 'Town' boy was invited had fallen to half its numbers and had become much demoralised. When he left, three years later, the House was full, and discipline had been restored. The turning-point in this struggle for authority is not without its lesson. One night he was awakened by hearing at his bedside two fellows from another dormitory, who led the opposition. Evidently they intended an undignified assault, and to escape in the darkness. Feigning to be still asleep, he heard the leader of his assailants say to the other, 'What is the use? There's sure to be a row. And he won't care a damn!' Had they only known it, his heart was in his mouth; but when this view prevailed and the two returned *ἀπρακτοι*, he knew that the day was won. It was everything to have it thought he 'didn't care a damn.' A mask of indifference aids authority.

Each House had its distinctive customs and badges, and was jealous of its honour and independence ; but, in theory, all were subject to the supreme authority of the whole Sixth Form. No House, for instance, could break the fundamental law which exempted the Upper School from 'fagging,' or confer the right to 'fag' on anyone who had not 'Sixth Power'; and an appeal lay always from the decision of a 'House Sixth Meeting' to a 'School Sixth Meeting,' although this right was exercised only once during my seven years' experience. The occasion—the victim is too magnanimous to take exception to this reminiscence—was an alleged fagging by one who has administered law and justice for many years upon the West Australian Goldfields, with a sagacity and good temper that have supplied any deficiency of technical knowledge. Even then he was six feet tall and muscular in proportion. Steel, who, as head of the school—he is now a Housemaster—administered the chastisement, was slight and puny by his side. Yet he took his 'licking' like a man, and, characteristically, bore no malice afterwards against the village Hampden who had resisted his illegal assumption of authority.

A School Sixth Meeting also could promulgate a general rule on matters of common concern ; and its decision on a matter of discipline, or its interpretation of a custom, might become, according to the circumstances, binding upon every House. But—speaking generally—each House exercised through its own Præpostors an independent and exclusive authority over all its internal affairs ; and its Sixth Meetings were the medium of communication between the Housemaster and the members of the House, just as the meeting of the Sixth Form, as a body, was the medium of communication between the Headmaster and the whole School. From the nature of its duties a House Sixth Meeting often made new rules ; while a School Sixth Meeting, which kept minutes and rarely assembled more frequently than once a term, professed to be merely the repository of the School traditions, and only legislated insensibly when it was applying these to new circumstances. Precedents, however, were seldom wanting, because the memory of Masters, who themselves were Old Rugbeians, could generally supply the deficiencies of the schoolboy memory ; and thus the torch was handed on to future generations. 'Sixth Form Meetings' were called by the Head of the School or Head of a House, as the case might be ; and the humblest boy in the School who had a grievance could require one to be summoned. Usually the impulse came

from the Headmaster or the Housemaster, who, if he were wise and tactful, kept his influence hidden, in order that the initiative of any change which he desired might appear to be the boys' spontaneous act. And experience proved that that House was always the best of which the Housemaster, although overseeing everything, appeared to depend upon his Sixth Form for the details of its internal management.

But the chief function of Sixth Meetings was the preservation of discipline, which at Rugby was the exclusive care of the Præpositors. No assistant-master, for instance, could inflict corporal punishment, but was required to report to the Headmaster any defiance of his authority, for which the punishment of an imposition might be inadequate. All other offences against good order or morals were dealt with by the Sixth, who (although it is painful to relate this to the present age) administered the necessary 'lickings' without a qualm! Mr. Justice Sargant may remember an occasion when, as Head of the School, he was both Judge and flagellator.

There were three forms of this punishment in ascending gravity. A single Præpositor might flick with his cane to keep a too eager crowd behind the touch-line during a football match, or to enforce an order in the dormitory; and the two Præpositors of the week also carried canes during 'calling over' in the Big School. But in all these cases the cane was rather the symbol of authority than a weapon of punishment. Graver offences against order or morals were dealt with much more formally. The accused would be summoned before a meeting of the Sixth of his own House, and would hear the case against him thoroughly investigated. If the evidence against him, or his own admissions, proved his guilt, one of two courses might be taken, according to the nature of the offence. If this were one which brought dishonour on the whole School, either because of its character or from the circumstances of its commission, the Head of the House would report it to the Head of the School, and jurisdiction over the culprit would pass then to a School Sixth Meeting, which would try the case afresh and adjudge and inflict the punishment. More frequently, when the offence was only against the discipline and rules of the House, or was not a matter of notoriety outside the House, punishment was awarded at once by the House Sixth Meeting and inflicted in their presence. In a grave case, the punishment might be inflicted in the hall in presence of all the House. Whether imposed by a House or a School Sixth Meeting, it always took the form of a caning on the honourable

portion of the culprit's body, he kneeling down, but keeping his trousers on. A School 'Sixth Licking' carried with it the heavier consequence that anyone who was adjudged to receive one for a third time was expelled from the School by the Headmaster.

That this was an invaluable training in the art of government is amply proved by the records of our Indian Empire ; but it must be admitted on the other side that it tended to create a consciousness of superiority, which did not endear the newly matriculated Old Rugbeian to his University contemporaries ! The system also had a weakness in its dependence on the individuality of the Housemasters and the Headmaster. Let one of these lose the power of exciting enthusiasm, or fail to win respect, and the Sixth became demoralised at once. This was the cause of the low tone of the School and its falling off in numbers during the unhappy Headmastership of Dr. Hayman. But while Masters and the Sixth work together, and there is no undue display of guidance or authority, the Sixth Form enjoys a power, responsibility, and dignity which attach to few positions in the greater world. 'Alexander,' writes Walpole in the same letter which was quoted at the opening of this article, 'as the head of the world, never tasted the true pleasure that boys of his own age have enjoyed as Head of a School.'

B. R. WISE.

BY THE WATERS OF BABYLON.

THIS is a story of a rearguard, a subject which lends itself to stories, since the days when Horatius kept the bridge and became famous for all time. Of all the strong positions that a lucky rearguard may find, a defile is the most propitious, and of all defiles a bridge is the best, especially if there be stout hands of the *Génie*, plying axe and lever, or in these days siting gelatine, for the last effort in the hour of flight. This particular rearguard, however, had other adventures, and had its existence towards the end of that great war we are fast forgetting, the war with the last of the wild men, which the Dutch called the Farmers' War, and some of the English Press 'The Rebellion.' Wars are soon forgotten, perhaps happily enough, or we should not now prate so readily of seeing the red blood flow. There are many inferior uses to which you can put men. To hang them is perhaps the worst, to kill them in battle only a shade less evil.

To be on a rearguard is always a trying service, even when it only means seeing the last of the weary cattle into camp when the rest of the force has been drinking hot tea these three hours past. To be on rearguard in Afridi-land to a retiring force is to see more highly developed form. Then every rock and stunted thorn which lay bare in the shimmering sun while the column advanced, would spawn a man with a rifle when that same column turned round to go home, or was drawing near its night bivouac. A rearguard on the high *veldt* when Delarey, or one George Kemp, was giving the party would be an equally well-developed form of tactical incident. There is also the night variety, when things get mixed and the importunate inquirer for the whereabouts of the rearguard may be told that it has gone on in front! The particular rearguard in question was one that was merely waiting while a column moved off from its night bivouac and had taken up the piquets vacated by the night outposts.

The column to which the writer had the privilege of being staff officer had halted for the night at the farm of Vierfontein, the 'Place' of Commandant Tolly De Beer. It had been a pleasant enough oasis in a *veldt* of mimosa scrub and red *vlei* grass. The

Vierfontein, or the four springs, trickled out of the limestone layer and ran in channels thick with watercress to fill the big muddy dam. A couple of willows drooped over the channels, and two or three poplars stood on the dam. I had already been there twice before. The first time had been Michaelmas day 1900, when the war was quite, quite young, not a year old in fact. Thirty good fat geese lived on that pond and drank at those water-cuts. My memory still stirs with pride when I think that twenty-five of those geese fell to my battery of artillery, no small achievement when there were not only Mounted Infantry—the 'Ruddy *Ikonas*'—about, but also some scallywag corps from Bechuanaland, who thought nothing of lifting other folks' property. This third visit took place towards the summer of 1902 . . . same old war . . . not a goose or a fowl cheered the horizon. Mrs. Tolly De Beer—*oud missis*, as the Kaffir boy called her—looked less ample than formerly, as well she might, for three years of war had not left many pickings on the *veldt*. The children, whose names were legion, looked more lanky, and the lines and puckers on their faces, so common on the dry plateaus of the *veldt*, seemed deeper than before. The eldest boy with the freckles was gone, had joined his father's commando. Folk who counted heads in offices and wondered why there were any more Boers left on the *veldt*, forgot that each year a large contingent of lads became of military age, and that the age of competence too was reduced as the war wore on. Lanky, freckly 'Cos de Beer had gone for a soldier, and was no doubt a zealous scout. Johanna, the eldest girl, had picked up the harmonium from some out-of-work school marm, who had put up with them, and thumped out the '*Volkslied*' for our edification. The whole family showed the strain of war, and would have been far better had they not escaped the convoys that had removed most of their neighbours to a refugee camp. Parched and ground wheat and maize had taken the place of coffee, and there was little to eat save mealie meal and biltong.

The farm, too, looked the worse for wear. The fences had been burnt by passing columns, and also the stacks of sheep-dung fuel from the kraals. One of the memory-stirring smells of the *veldt* was that of the said fuel. Once the soldiery could bring themselves to use it, it disappeared fast enough. The harmonium still remained, and had escaped the demand for fuel. It was in fact the ghost of the fat, comfortable *platz* I had first known, and the drooping willows echoed the spirit of desolation till I looked again

lest the spectres of the twenty-five geese, of glorious memory, should be sitting atop the dam to mock me.

Ashamed, though for no fair reason, at the haunting aftermath of war, I had avoided an interview with the lady of the farm the day before, content to prove my sympathy for the puckered childish faces by sending a present of coffee and bullybeef. In the morning the column was astir id its bivouac early, and the waggons were inspanned by flush of dawn. After more than two years of war and *trek* it did not take a column long to get under way. The morning was clear and fresh. Of all the fresh breezes that blow for mankind, none are fresher and freer than those off the *veldt*. The heavy dew glistened on the *vlei* grass and the *doorn* scrub, and the faint glow of dawn glowed over the deep blue-grey of the *kopje* and the swelling *bult*¹ as I walked back past the farmhouse after a visit to the outposts that were just changing places with the points of the rearguard, who had relieved them. In the farm the young voices were singing, after their daily wont, the Psalms of David. War breaks through most of the laws and *convenances* of life. In the English provinces first occupied by the invading Dutch, and then re-occupied by our troops, with all magistracy fled and all civil law at a standstill, everyone did that which seemed to him best. The Dutch parson's wife borrowed the silver left locked in the English magistrate's house, or dug up his rose trees and transferred them to her own garden. The English farmer took and branded with his own brand his Dutch neighbours' sheep. There was for a time no law, and everyone did that which was good and pleasant, and all ties, moral and physical, were unloosed. The demoralising effect of no law and no authority to live under was too much for poor human nature. The child alone in the house when family and servants are at church has the delights of the jam cupboard and the forbidden library shelf. So, in the tracts over which the tide of war had swept and swept again, there was free licence for all who dare take it. Yet, with it all, the simple Dutch sang daily, as was their ancient wont, before sunrise, the Psalms of David in simple chant. Now and again as the sore tried British would run some guerrilla band to earth after a long night *trek*, these same guerrillas would be singing the morning Psalm as the soldiery stole around them. There was just a hint of Graham of Claver's and his dragoons about it all—only a hint, that would not bear following—but the impression was there, and the young

¹ 'Bosom,' a term applied to the roll of the high *veldt*.

voices rang true and clear as I came down past the dam. And the Psalm was the *Ecce quam bonum*, the song of the Freemasons :

‘ *I zeit hoe goed hoe lieflijk is’t
dat zonen van’t zelfde huis ais broeders
zamen wonen.*’

‘ Behold how beautiful it is for brethren to dwell together in unity.’ A pretty reflection when two stubborn races of the same stock were each trying to wear the other down.

As I came back to the camp the troops were under way, and the leading squadrons already winding up the *bult* and out of sight in the roll and trough of the *veldt*. Cavalry of the Line, wild men from the Oversea Dominions, two guns of the Royal Artillery, and a squadron of the real Afrikander Irregulars, runaway ships’ stewards and cattle-tenders, *et hoc genus omne*, all at five bob a day, ‘ *Point d’argent, point de Suisse.*’ They, for this occasion, with a half-squadron of dragoons, formed our rearguard. The colonel of all the columns had sent me word that he had ridden on with the leading squadron, so I dallied to see if the rearguard, among other duties, searched the bivouac for ammunition dropped by the troops from their bandoliers, the which for many months had been the source whence the brethren had replenished their stocks.

The damp, heavy smoke curled up from the smouldering camp fires, and the *débris* of the lines looked uninviting, with here and there some abandoned *veldt* mare that had foaled in the night and was better left to her own devices on the *vlei* than led along. The army was prodigal of horse-flesh, and indeed it had to be. The troops had now all gone, and the waggon-drivers were cracking their long whips and the buck waggons were moving off *en bloc* as best the ant-heaps would permit. The officer commanding the rearguard was standing near the farm and I strolled over to pass the time of day, and listened while he gave instructions to an officer to ride back to the rear points on the rise and bid them keep their eyes skinned, since it was just the sort of morning Kemp might be on the prowl.

As I neared the house the *Vrouw* came out and beckoned to me. I went towards the *stoep*, accompanied by an Afrikander conductor who was my interpreter. Mrs. Tolly De Beer had tears in her eyes, which she furtively wiped with her apron, and her ample figure heaved with emotion. Then she spoke to me in the *taal*, which Rennike, the conductor, interpreted when it was beyond me.

'There is a woman dead. I have only one Kaffir boy and the children. We cannot bury her without help.'

'Have you no commando near by?'

'We have not seen the commando for many days. Come inside.'

We went inside. In the inner room were several beds, and on one, under a sheet, the poor stiff lines of a corpse. The *Vrouw* drew back the sheet. By the dead woman's side lay a newly born infant, also dead.

'She died last night, Captain. We had little to give a sick woman.'

'Who is she?'

'*Vrouw* Van der Merwe, from Slip Klip Oost.'

'Where are her friends?'

'She has none that I know of. She was only a *bijwoner's* daughter.'

'Where is her husband?'

'At St. Helena with General Piet Cronje.'

'With General Cronje! Was he taken at Paardeberg?'

'Yes, Captain.'

'But that was two years ago!'

'Yes, Captain.'

I turned on my heel. What a tragedy! I would of course help bury the poor woman.

'You have a coffin?'

It was the conductor who asked the question. There is always a coffin on every farm in normal times. It is kept in the waggon-shed. Far away from joiners' shops, the eventualities of life must be prepared for. *Vrouw* De Beer replied that there was one in the coach-house, and added that the Kaffir boy, old Dirk there, had been digging a grave during the night. She pointed to the little grey-stone enclosure beyond the sheep *kraal*, the burial-ground common to every farm, or at least to every group of adjacent farms. The old folk live and die and are buried on their farms, while the ages pass on the continent of Europe. But the graves are largely the graves of children. The Dutch bear many and rear few. In almost every *zitkamer* there hangs in a gold frame on an illuminated mount a picture of a coffin, round which are written the names of the dead children of the household.

'Rennike,' I said, 'go across to Captain Adams and ask for four of his men, and say that the rearguard must wait for twenty

minutes more. Also get two loading ropes from the pack mule with the Maxim gun.'

There was no time to lose. It is as bad in guerrilla war for a rearguard to be too far from its main body as it is to hug it. I called the Kaffir and went over to the waggon-house. There was the coffin; two of the De Beer children were sitting in it. It made an excellent waggon to play in, and a small boy stood at the head and cracked a miniature stock whip. The bulging head of the coffin was not unlike the lines of a buck waggon; the resemblance in contour seemed almost ludicrous. We hustled out the babies, after paying toll from the milk chocolate in my haversack. There was no lid; it had evidently gone the way of all fuel. Dirk and I shouldered the shell. By this time the two babies had realised that we meant business with their plaything and were overjoyed. Children love a funeral. Remember Toddy and Budge and the 'deader.'

We carried the coffin into the bedroom and placed it beside the corpse. Rennie had come back with the men and the loading ropes. Together we lifted the victims of war into the lid-less coffin and covered the whole with a sheet. The four troopers lifted the coffin and we moved out to the burial-ground, which one solitary cypress marked. Laying our loading ropes from the Maxim pack mule across the grave, we lowered the coffin. Adams, who commanded the squadron of Irregulars, had come up and was standing hard by. For want of a burial service, or indeed time to read one, I had repeated the Lord's Prayer, and many a man in those days was buried in his blanket with less. I looked up at Adams, who said absently, 'It is thus, my brethren, that we commit our brother to the grave.' It struck a chord in my memory and I remembered the Great Chapter, and closed that sad and hasty ceremony with a verse or two that I could recall:

'And the mourners shall go about in the streets:

'Or ever the silver cord be loosed, or the golden bowl be broken, or the pitcher be broken at the fountain, or the wheel be broken at the cistern:

'Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was, and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it.'

Passing to the side of the grave to drop in earth, earth to earth 'as it was,' I caught sight of a helio on the *bult*, a couple of miles

away, that had just caught the risen sun. Two signallers from the Horse Guards Blue were attached to the Irregular squadron. Ponderously they settled down to take the message, but we had no light, and I called to them to flicker an answer if they could get enough light for that; it was too early to get their own station going. The column commander evidently thought we were delaying, and the message was short and to the point: 'Hurry up.' He was quite right. The last waggons were out of sight over the first roll in the *veldt*, and we were delaying unduly. It was time to be off, and the farmer's wife and her Kaffir boy must fill in the grave.

'Get your main guard mounted, Adams, and move it off; that will satisfy them.'

Mrs. Tolly De Beer was weeping quietly on the *stoep*, with two of her smaller children clinging to her skirts. I told her that she must get the grave filled in herself, and she nodded as I turned my horse away.

'So long, Captain.'

'So long, Missis'; and as I passed old Dirk—

'So long, Baas.'

I trotted clear of the farm, and past the still open grave, out to the little knoll above the dam, and waved to the subaltern who was with the points, and then turned slowly to follow after the main guard. Looking back, I saw the points along the ridge behind the farm mounting and come cantering in towards the farm, or back right and left along the horizon. When you come away from a ridge it is as well to come quickly and get to your next position as soon as possible. Experience makes that second nature.

As the two centre parties got level with the farm it began, '*Pac boc! pac boc!*' away on the right. Then again on the left '*Pac boc! pac boc.*'

'Damn those brethren!' and it opened again, a third time, from the centre of the *doorn* scrub on the ridge. '*Pac boc!*' This time they were getting on to me, and two Mauser bullets hummed overhead, and a third struck a stone near. The rear parties were coming on apace, and I saw the main guard open out into a line at a couple of horses' lengths interval; it was no earthly use trying to catch them save by artifice on occasion. It was all right; no one would be cut off, and we were all comfortably on the move, but . . . well, if we'd known the swine were about they might have buried their own beastly dead. And so Adams thought too.

The main column was evidently anxious, and was taking no risks. Just as I had come up to the main guard, and had looked to see that the parties had come safely through the farm, there was a well-known sound overhead—a sound very distinct from the bee-like hum of the Mauser bullets, or of that confounded little lark that simulated them, and tried jaded nerves in the early mornings. In those days the whistle of the lark sounded like a rifle bullet, and a horse's cough like a pompom, especially at night.

A few seconds after the noise had passed, two fleecy shrapnel spattered the ridge, and we could now see the brethren moving about. Down at the farm Mrs. De Beer ran out and dragged two children into the house. That was the end of the story. Seeing that we were unmolested it was not worth firing more at spots on the horizon: 'them b— spots on the 'orizon,' as the sergeant-major of artillery expressed it. The guns were waiting unlimbered till we came abreast.

'All serene?' asked the subaltern in charge.

'All serene, sonny.'

'Think I'll just drop a couple into the farm, and make those mechanics sit up.'

'I don't think I would, old chap,' I said; 'hardly worth it.' And it wasn't.

G. F. MACMUNN.

HIS WIFE'S ALLY.

'How is he, Dan?'

'He has been asleep ever since you went, and he is not awake yet.'

'That is good.'

As she spoke, Mrs. Foster descended from a hooded Cape cart on to the bare grass in front of the farm where her husband was waiting for her. Together they entered the verandah which surrounded their house, and sat down.

Both were tired, and grateful for the shade, though the acute glare of the veldt was beginning to wane with the approach of sunset. Mrs. Foster had been that afternoon to the funeral of a neighbour's child, while her husband had spent weary hours teaching his boys the handling of a new plough. For a time they were content to rest without speaking, while Rosa, the little Basuto handmaid, in garish cotton frock and turban, set the tea-table, her bare feet flitting inaudibly to and fro.

'Tell me about it,' he said gently, when she had finished and gone, as Edith Foster still sat silent.

'Oh, Dan, it was dreadful!'

She turned to him as she spoke, and the sight of her drawn white face suddenly brought the scene almost too vividly before his mind's eye. He was glad and yet ashamed that he had not been able to persuade himself to witness it. But she spoke in a quiet, even voice, pausing from time to time, as though determined to keep her feelings well in hand.

'Of course there were very few people; one could not expect anything else on account of the infection . . . The dear old Brookes came, and the Jouberts, and the Fullers, and that was all. They had put my little wreath of sweet peas on the coffin; I did wish there had been more of them in bloom . . . And the poor father and mother stood hand in hand beside the grave, with the tears running down their cheeks.'

She stopped, and her own tears fell slowly. She felt the death of little Lucy Carter the more deeply that their own child was recovering from the disease which had killed her. A severe form of measles was rife in the district, but so far it had been fatal only to her little boy's playmate. The five-year-old child had done well at first; even when pneumonia set in she made a gallant struggle. Then suddenly she gave alarming signs of heart failure.

The family doctor, summoned as quickly as her father's horse could gallop, had covered barely six of the fifteen miles that lay between him and his patient before his car stuck fast in a drift swollen by recent rain. When at length he reached the farm, Lucy Carter had been dead an hour.

'They thanked me afterwards for coming, and for the flowers, and poor Mrs. Carter asked after Phil, and said she was so glad he was getting on well. She was so kind, I didn't know what to say—I just felt choked. To think that it might have been—ourselves.'

'But at least they have Rob and Kitty left,' she added irrelevantly, 'and we have but the one.'

Husband and wife were silent before the inscrutable mercy of God.

'Do you remember,' she said presently, 'how you used to say to me: "Very soon all these doctors will be getting motor-cars, and then it won't matter what distance one lives from a town"? And now that Dr. Edwards has his car, here is what happens—and will be always likely to happen in this country.'

A faint shadow crossed her husband's face.

'It is true that cars break down,' he said temperately, 'but one tragic failure must not make us forget the ninety-nine journeys that end well. They are a great blessing in South Africa.'

'Oh yes! One would be worse off without them . . . Somehow, if this had happened to Dr. Edwards' old cart and pair I should not have felt it so much,' she went on. 'But to know that even with a fast motor-car one is not safe—'

'Who is not safe?' asked Daniel.

'Phil!' said Mrs. Foster, and her voice quivered.

Her husband did not at once reply; he was anxious to be very patient. Edith was tired; she had been through much anxiety in the last fortnight; above all he would fain avoid the wound that she had covertly touched.

'We must not be morbid because of what has happened,' he said after a moment. 'Granted that Edwards could have saved the poor little dear (and that is by no means certain), such things are extremely rare in any country.'

'Oh! I am not afraid of your being morbid about it, Dan,' said his wife, colourlessly.

She twisted her hands uneasily for a few seconds, then suddenly raised them and hid her face.

'Oh, Dan, I *can't* face it—the possibility of such a thing happen-

ing to us ! It is like a warning we ought not to disregard. If Phil died, the light of my life would go out, and of yours too, though I don't think you realise it. What does anything matter compared with the safety of our only child ?'

She broke down and wept. It was upon him again—for well he knew her meaning—the old harrowing subject which for now well-nigh two years they had avoided, living in apparent peace. Reserve there had been, but not forgetfulness ; though so complete was Edith's silence that he had sometimes allowed himself to dream she was reconciled at last to the conditions of her life. He knew now that his deeper instincts were right : she hated South Africa as much as ever. What could he say, whose love for it grew stronger with every year he spent there ?

To his relief, at that moment the nurse in charge of the sick child appeared on the stoep.

'Phil is awake now, Mrs. Foster, and asking for you,' she said, and at the sound of her voice Edith at once controlled herself with averted face.

It was time, too, for Daniel to oversee the milking of the cows now moving towards the farm ; a stately procession, bay, copper, and russet-coloured against the blue of the December sky.

Edith watched him for a moment as he went towards the beasts he loved. With his bare sunburnt arms, his rolled-up shirt-sleeves, and battered felt hat, he was the typical South African farmer at work. But the free-and-easy uniform of his profession could not conceal his breeding. He had been ten years on the soil, and his refinement was as perfect as the day they were married. If Dan had 'let himself go,' his wife sometimes thought she could better have borne her exile.

Foster had long ago recognised the mistake he made in marrying Edith Trevor. In the little drawing-room at Bournemouth, when she talked with enthusiasm of the great solitary spaces to which she was going with him, neither he nor she had realised how completely her happiness lay among the genteel crowds, the cosy sociability that she was leaving behind. She had no power to project herself into unknown surroundings, and while she talked of the joys of Africa all she saw—and loved—was Dan's blue eyes. She controlled herself, though with a sickening sense of disillusion, when the naked realities of life in an ill-built house on the bare sun-baked veldt came home to her.

There were few neighbours, whether Dutch or British, to welcome her to this new world, and none of them, as she soon said to

Dan, were really gentlefolks ; there were none that she would have called on at home. She saw, however, the impossibility of applying English social standards to the high veldt, and met their advances by a chilly courtesy which sealed her unpopularity in the district. Her secret comfort was that they were not to live in South Africa for ever ; his, that the expected child would fill her lonely hours and help her to forget what she had lost in marrying him.

But the babe, a little girl, died at its birth ; and then, in the extremity of her disappointment, she no longer tried to conceal her dislike of the country. Only when Dan, harassed but not despairing, sent her home on a long visit, did she recover her outward self-control.

After her return, life went more smoothly for the ill-assorted pair. Dan prospered in his undertakings ; ere long he was able to build her a comfortable stone house, and to lay out a little garden for her pleasure.

Then, after five years of marriage, their little son was born. Foster, watching her absorption in the child, might be excused for failing to realise that it implied no relenting in her attitude towards South Africa. He had reckoned without the unimaginative tenacity of his wife. Not even the babe could reconcile her to the land of his birth. She took pride, indeed, in the steadfastness of her secret antipathy, and justified it by the apparent resignation with which she bore her exile.

At last, when Phil was three years old, her smouldering resentment broke into flame. Dan's uncle, and the latter's only son, died within a few weeks of each other ; he found himself unexpectedly the inheritor of twenty thousand pounds. Eight hundred a year, not to mention the proceeds of the sale of the greatly improved farm ! They could quit South Africa to-morrow ! Conscious that she must act at once upon the altered situation, or not at all, Edith, trembling in her boldness, proposed their final return to England.

The dismay on her husband's face told her instantly what his answer would be.

'What, sell the place *now* !' he exclaimed, 'when I am running it on new methods of which I cannot possibly see the full result for two or three years ? Edith ! you don't seriously mean it !'

She pleaded Phil's future, but without success. The child was thriving, and Dan had promised that he should be sent to school in England when the time came. As for friends for him, surely the little Carters were good enough ; their parents were English, and very decent people, even if occasionally unsteady on the letter H. It was a blessing to have them so close.

Dan's easy acceptance of his circumstances stung his wife for the hundredth time; nor did she attempt to conceal it.

'Then is this money, which I hoped would enable you to live as a gentleman among gentlemen, to lie idle?' she asked.

'Idle? No,' he replied. 'I shall want some of it at once for the farm——'

He would have added 'and for you and Phil,' but at the word 'farm' she broke into such long and angry reproaches as goaded even Dan's sweet temper to bitterness.

There followed upon this crisis, as often happens, a certain *rapprochement*, the conscience-stricken protest of the love that still remained beneath their estrangement.

'Try to bear it a while longer for my sake,' he said, holding her in his arms, 'and I will try to live in England again some day for yours.'

And for a moment, forgetting their griefs, he was to her the old, gay, handsome Dan, who had bewitched her at first sight, and she the fair-haired girl whose sweetness had so well masked the unpliant nature that lay beneath it.

Since then, by unspoken consent, they had kept silence on the subject.

And now that she had suddenly approached it once more, Foster, who dreaded a scene as much as any man, knew not whether to pass by or to discuss an appeal set in this new and poignant key. Her fears were morbid, exaggerated, the result of the distress she had witnessed that day; yet it pained him to think of ignoring them. When at length he reluctantly returned from the milking-shed, his mind was still in doubt. Edith, waiting white and quivering upon the stoep, took from him the onus of decision.

'Phil looks brighter, but oh! so dreadfully thin!' she remarked, as her husband slowly mounted the steps. Then, as he did not at once reply, she came and sat down beside him.

'Dan,' she said, in a low, tense voice that recalled his troubled gaze from the distant veldt to herself, 'you think me a bore or worse, and I am willing that you should; but I must—I must speak of this. I determined that I would die rather than ever mention it again, but for Phil's sake I have broken my vow. Dan, will you listen?'

'Of course I will, only there is no need to talk about broken vows. We are just an ordinary husband and wife.'

'And are our circumstances ordinary?' she asked with concealed bitterness.

'No, thank God, there are not many couples in such a hell of a fix.'

'Then you must forgive me if I can't be simply commonplace about it all. I won't speak of what I have suffered in these years—I determined long ago to play the game, and never again to put forward my personal side. Besides, I do not think it would interest you if I did.'

'You don't really mean that?' he said gently.

'Indeed I do. Could any man who cared for his wife's happiness be content to live a stranger to her thoughts? If little Lucy's death had not forced me to it, you know that you would never have spoken of our future again.'

'I suppose I am a stupid ass,' he said with a weary smile. 'The soil has got into my brain. Tell on—let me hear your thoughts now.'

'It is the soil that has got into your brain!' she exclaimed, eager to agree with him. 'Oh, Dan! you have been out here ever since we were married—far, far too long! You have lost touch with everything else—with England—with me! The one hope I have left is that the thought of Phil may rouse you!'

'To leave?'

'Yes. I must—I will speak!' she said, with growing excitement. 'You have done well—everyone who knows says that you have trebled the value of the place. The land is going up in price; there is a keen demand in the district. John Hart has just sold his farm for six pounds the morgen, and his grass is nothing like so good as yours, nor his house either. You could live on your uncle's money even if you gave away the farm to the first comer. You have made a great success of it—could not you think of selling now?'

How neatly, he thought, she could use her knowledge of the life she hated!

'That is the trouble with success,' he said with rueful humour, as though still unwilling to come to grips with his dilemma. 'You cannot have enough of it; specially not of South African success, which is largely spiced with failure.'

'Oh, Dan! Couldn't you sell?'

'Let me know where I am,' he said, ignoring her entreaty, and his harassed face grew set. 'Edith, do you hate this country as much as ever?'

'I don't want to talk of myself; I only want to do the best for Phil.'

'But I want to know.'

'Then—yes!'

'And for the old reasons?'

'Yes. But the old seem swallowed up in the new. I have borne it all so long; the ungrateful, lying natives, always ready to take advantage of us—the loneliness—the separation from one's kith and kin and traditions—the lack of culture—the commonness of so many of our neighbours—(oh! I have always acknowledged that they are good-hearted!)—the dishonesty of some, which even you acknowledge. I think I could go on bearing all that, though I could never feel it the place for you, Dan, still less for your son to grow up in. But this death has shaken me terribly. I am not happy-go-lucky; I can't feel as you do about it. The thought of keeping Phil in a country where such things are possible is a nightmare!'

She broke off, and he heard how fast she breathed.

Foster was not quick to speak or to be angry, and the memory of their former crisis was an added check upon his tongue. That Edith, like many another woman who has married slightly above her station, was very jealous for her husband's position, he had long since observed. In the Orange Free State he and she were no one in particular, while at home the Fosters of Knowling had for generations been people of mark. There lay the heart of her quarrel with South Africa. He guessed that, unknown to herself, the old grievance coloured this new phase of the matter.

Edith, stealing a glance at him as he sat silent, had no clue to his thoughts.

'Dan, what are you waiting for?' she said at length. 'There is no full-stop in farming. Now would do just as well as in the vague future.'

'But suppose I got a better price—as I am convinced I can—by waiting: eight pounds, even ten pounds the morgen?'

'Oh, the price, the price! As though that mattered, especially to us!'

'It does not matter, except as the tangible recognition of my work,' he said slowly.

'Then you care more for the work than for Phil's safety!' she exclaimed, her self-control fast ebbing.

'If you can believe such a thing, of what use would it be for me to deny it?'

Daniel rose, and began to pace the stoep.

'You are not yourself, Edith,' he said, still forcing himself to be gentle. 'The Carters' trouble has upset you, or you would not

take such black views. Let us wait to discuss this till another day.'

'Wait—always wait!' she cried, and the tragic bitterness in her voice could not escape the listener. 'Till when? Till Phil is dead?'

She was overwrought; she was speaking wildly; and he knew it. Nevertheless her shot went home, and roused that slow-moving anger of his to action. He stood still and turned to his wife, his face flushed and dark, his voice very steady.

'Edith,' he said, 'this cannot go on. You and I have got to part. I love this country; and I am not yet ready to leave my work. But that is no reason why I should keep you here any longer. If it will make you feel safer and happier to take Phil home to England, you have my leave to do so. I offer you your freedom.'

'My—freedom?'

She looked at him vaguely, as though she did not understand.

'Your complete personal liberty—a life free of me and of South Africa. You shall have the means to make a comfortable home for him, and to bring him up as you wish.'

'And you?'

Her voice trembled.

'I shall stay here.'

There was an ominous silence, and then Mrs. Foster's remonstrance broke forth.

'Never, never! What has held me up all these weary years, but the knowledge that I was doing my duty? Do you suppose I think so lightly of it that I will take my ease in England without you? My duty is here with you, whatever happens, whatever I suffer. You and I and Phil will leave South Africa together, or not at all!'

She spoke with an unexpected passion that utterly routed him. Her love for Dan—all that remained of it—no less than her abiding sense of martyrdom, was stung to the quick. As for Dan, torn and harrowed by her vehemence, angrily conscious that he had blundered, he had but one desire—to be alone. He must think things out calmly, he must get a grip on his conflicting sensations. Without another word he strode away into the sunset, and it seemed to Edith as he did so that she was watching a stranger. So far had she drifted from him in those years of brooding silence.

* * * * *

The beautiful African night came swiftly over the veldt. For a little while the ploughed lands glowed red-brown like mahogany;

the pale pure green of the shadowless veldt turned to gold ; far off on the western sky-line a team of oxen showed like black beads, clear-cut and infinitesimally small, against the sunset. Then the great ball dipped and was gone. Suddenly the immense quiet of the plain was alive with the whirring of crickets innumerable. Before the after-glow had faded, or the stars lit their shy lamps, a splendid moon rose in the cold blue east, and made a new and ghostly daylight.

Dan had seen it all a thousand times before, and never without a stirring of the heart. The love he bore to the land of his calling—a love which had sunk its roots all the deeper that he had long since learned to hide it from his wife—welled up within him at such times. It was a precious secret possession of which nothing could rob him ; neither Edith's coldness, nor the frets and disappointments of a farmer in a land so beset with drought and cloud-burst, so menacing to animal life. And now once more the calm beauty of the night had its way with him. It could not heal a distress so deep as his, but slowly it quieted his anger, and set him free to face a situation grown suddenly intolerable.

She had refused his offer : it was open to him to regard the matter as at an end. If a wife will not leave her husband, then clearly she must stay. And she had been so utterly unreasonable in her terrors ! Why should Phil die because Lucy had died ? This was but a morbid fancy, deftly used to bend him to her purpose. Yet he knew that, though the fancy might pass, that which lay behind it—her fixed, untiring hatred of the country—would remain. Fool that he had been to hope for any change ! In the silence of their armed neutrality it had deepened from a grievance to a religion.

Dear country that she had never attempted to love or understand ! To her its loneliness was vacancy, unnatural, abhorrent ; to him, freedom. His eyes rested upon the moonlit veldt with passionate tenderness, as though it had suffered wrong. What mattered the shortcomings of men in these infinite spaces undulating like a calm sea to the furthest horizon ; beneath this enormous heaven, where by day the clouds, floating up from beneath the edge of the world, passed over in threatening, sultry pageants or in peaceful companies, white upon the burning blue ; and by night a thousand thousand friendly stars watched over its solitude ? He asked no more of his neighbours than their kind hearts could give. Long since he had chosen that life, because his nature drove him to primal tasks and free, untrodden places ; to an existence

hampered as little as possible by social tradition. And he had found abundantly that for which he craved. For his had been not only the chequered joys of an ambitious and experimental farmer absorbed in his calling, the immemorial pride with which man subdues untamed nature to human ends and wins a new home from the virgin soil, but the nobler happiness of one who, ploughing where blood has flowed, sets himself by all that goodwill can effect to soften the memory of old wrongs, and hasten the fruition of that racial equity for which his countrymen have died. He turned and looked back in an impulse of unspeakable affection at the visible issue of his labours : the house he had built, the stable and orchard and glistening dam ; the oxen taking their ease in the camp by the milking-shed ; the long furrows, where the young mealies were springing green, and vigorous as soldiers. And it was as though he bade it all farewell.

‘ Dan, what are you waiting for ? ’

The question sounded with dreadful urgency, now that he had clearly seen into the depths of the gulf that parted them. For what indeed did he wait, except for the fascination of watching the fulfilment of his schemes, the hope of doing better this season than last year, or the year before ? ‘ I love it ! ’ At bottom he had no other answer.

And if he sold the place and returned to England, what was he to do there ? His experience of farming had been won under totally different conditions. His folk and friends had gone their several ways ; he would return among them a stranger. The tedium of Edith’s paradise—a leisured existence on private means—would be to him intolerable.

Yet, when he married her, it had been understood that some day they were to return to England for good ; she had looked forward passionately to that time, as well he knew. His soul had long since cast anchor in South Africa ; he had now no wish to live elsewhere. But to-night he realised as never before that to remain there permanently involved a breach of faith with Edith.

‘ Some day—some day—but not yet ! ’ he thought, torn by the misery of his dilemma.

He had walked forward without thinking where he was going ; now he stopped abruptly. Before him was the wire fence which separated the extreme northern end of his farm from that of the Carters. A quarter of a mile away the house of sorrow stood dark in the moonlight, its white iron roof gleaming like mother-of-pearl. Just beyond the fence, in the centre of a small enclosure

surrounded by barbed wire, beside a low rough cross of wood, the bare grass was broken by a little oblong mound. It was Lucy Carter's grave.

They had laid her on the open veldt, where the former owner of the Carters' farm had been buried ten years before. In the flesh old Pie Naar had been rough-tongued and none too sober, a terror to little girls; but now, with a white wooden cross for the only sign of him, there was something companionable in his neighbourhood. The December sun had already dealt harshly with the flowers upon her grave; with the great white roses from the one bush in the Carters' garden, the little bunches of frail and sapless veldt blossoms, and Edith's own sweet peas. Still fragrant, and almost as bright of colour as by day, they lay in drooping masses upon the earth which covered her.

It was with a painful shock that Foster found himself thus unawares in the hidden presence of the dead child. He paused; and uncovered; then, climbing through the boundary fence, approached the burying-place, and stood a long while, as still as the graves themselves. The harsh far-away calling of a bustard, the rustle of the blue-gum trees which screened one end of the enclosure, alone disturbed the quiet of the windless night.

'Poor little mound! So small in this silvery vastness, so silent that it seemed impossible it could be Lucy's grave! Foster loved children, and this one had been very dear to him. As he stood there, the image of the gay innocent face and restless limbs for ever vanished wrung his heart.

How happy she and Phil had been! Equals in years, agility, and natural wickedness, hers was the daring, his the stubborn perseverance which carries infantile adventure to a successful end. So short a time at play together—so much still left to climb, and taste, and peep into! And now her little partner must go on alone.

Never before had the swift, irrevocable aspect of the mystery so overwhelmed him. What must her death be to the poor parents if he, a neighbour only, could feel it thus? Yet no mere neighbour, but a father whom the same visitation had spared! 'One shall be taken, and the other left.' And it was Phil—Phil who was left.

'They have Rob and Kitty, and we have but the one.'

In sight of Lucy's grave, his wife's words struck him with the shattering force that lurks, biding its hour, in every truism . . .

And in the silence the little grave took Edith's part against him.

'Take Phil away!' it spoke, as though with words. 'What would your life be worth without him? Take him away!'

So completely did he fall under the spell of that soundless voice that each attempt of his sane and vigorous nature to silence it was unavailing. The day's events had unnerved him more than he was aware. Reason itself made common cause with Lucy, and bore down the struggles of his heart. He had drifted, he had hoped; man-like, he had put the question of their future by. But now could life in England be worse than that which lay before him if he held Edith to his will? Could he any longer face the daily, hourly company of an unhappy woman, dutiful, bitter in her unspoken reproaches? And if Edith's terrors should bring their own fulfilment, and Phil should die? What compelling bond was there between them but the child? He and he alone, the darling of them both, could keep from extinction the poor embers of their mutual love. In a flash of dreadful prevision he saw himself and Edith sitting solitary by their desolate hearth, and read in her vacant eyes the one obsession of her mind:

'You would not listen; you killed our child.'

'Take him away!' said Lucy's grave, and won for Edith a contest in which, unsupported, she might even yet have failed; so strong are loved use and wont and the passion of the soil in some of the best of men.

Daniel turned away, and strode across his own lands to the sandy high-road which crossed them at some distance from the place of burial. He knew by the power of an instinct strung to abnormal vividness that the man approaching him on horseback was the one man necessary to his resolve.

* * * * *

When at last he returned to Edith, waiting in the lamp-lit sitting-room in all the agony of mingled compunction and suspense, she saw that he looked visibly aged. She tried to greet him, but words failed her.

'You were quite right,' said Dan in a voice she did not know. 'The price of land is steadily going up. Derksen's brother wrote to me lately, wanting to buy the place . . . I met him just now . . . I have agreed to sell it at seven pounds the morgen.'

Then followed a silence so long and deadly that his wife thought she must faint. She had not known how dreadful victory can be.

'We can go to England now for good,' he said. 'I will live anywhere you like . . . But not at Bournemouth! No. My God! not Bournemouth—where we met!'

E. H. LIDDERDALE.

A DAY WITH NAPOLEON.

'AH-ER-ER-OH, is that you, Meneval? Seven o'clock? Anything special? Wake me again in five minutes . . .

'Constant, give me a new pair of boots. Shave me quickly. What have you got for me, Meneval? . . .

'Listen, Meneval, I will not have the *Moniteur* using such extravagant language about me. See the Editor . . . Constant, why the devil don't you be more careful? You are not shaving a musket . . . Now, Meneval, let's to work . . . Write as follows to Marshal Masséna, and see that you give him all his titles :

"MY COUSIN,—I learn with regret that you have not yet pushed the English into the sea. Surely a few fortifications at a place like Torres Vedras are no obstacle to the invincible energy of the French? I expect to hear by an early courier that Portugal is entirely free from the enemy.

"May God have you in His holy keeping. . . ."

See that you put that "May God" sentence in all letters to the Marshals, Meneval. Now write to Emile Rejardin, sub-prefect at Marier, in the department of the Rhone :

"MONSIEUR,—I draw your attention to the fact that in the yearly accounts of your commune there is an item of eleven francs in cash not accounted for. I am instructed by His Majesty the Emperor to say that this is the second time you have been written to on this subject. I expect from you by the post leaving your commune on the 19th inst., which gives you three clear days, a full report dealing with each of the following points :

- "1. How the mistake, if any, has occurred.
- "2. To whose negligence it is due that its discovery was not made earlier.
- "3. Whether it has been to anyone's advantage, and if so, to whose.
- "4. You will explain fully why you have made no reply to my letter of the 30th ulto. dealing with this subject."

Sign that yourself, Meneval. If any man thinks he can play fast and loose with France in these days, he shall soon be undeceived . . . Who comes to see me this morning? Give me the list . . .

‘Metternich, yes—the Prince of Ponte-Corvo, yes—the Prince of Benevento—well, well, I believe that man thinks I cannot do without him. He is useful, certainly. He knows the world, and he knows *my* world. Perhaps I was too hard on him a year ago. I might want him again. I had better see him . . . Duroc, Junot, Savary, the usual crowd, I see. Why, here is Bourrienne! Meneval, what am I to do with that fellow? He robbed me, he robbed France. I more than suspect him of corresponding with the Bourbons whilst he was at Hamburg. You cannot guess how I once trusted him, and how I was deceived. I won’t see him, Meneval. Let an intimation to that effect be conveyed to him in the ante-chamber. I am accused everywhere of being too soft with my early friends . . .

‘The instant a despatch should come from Eugène, or from Soult, let me have it . . . Ah! Josephine, good morning. Dainty as ever, I see. Come to interrupt your poor, hardworking husband. Now, now, run away. I have a great deal to do. I shall see you at breakfast. By the bye, change your grocer; the eggs yesterday were abominable. Now, Meneval, write to Marshal Soult:

“MY COUSIN,—I have received your despatch, No. 149, of the 4th ulto. and desire to express my approval in general of your disposition of your forces in the affair of the 3rd ulto. I wish you, however, to reflect upon the following point. . . . Suppose the enemy, instead of throwing himself upon your centre, had deployed over and round the hills on your left, and thereby taken you in the rear. You would have run the greatest risk of a reverse. Where was your artillery? I desire to most firmly impress upon you that, in the event of a surprise, well-placed artillery, at its very lowest value, always ensures breathing time. . . .”

Don’t forget the “May God” sentence, Meneval. What, breakfast? . . .

‘Constant, I am ready for work again. I will only wear the star of the Legion of Honour . . .

‘Meneval, write to the Mayor of St. Quentin that he is not to call the new square the Place Napoléon, but the Place Marengo. Write Chateaubriand that his Majesty has, at present, no occasion for his services. The inflated ass . . . Write Madame de Staël that you will bring her application to be allowed to live in Paris before his Majesty the Emperor at an early date. We must fight the women with their own weapons, Meneval.

'Write to the King of Westphalia, in my name, that I am displeased with his course of life; he has a charming queen, too. . .

'What, ten o'clock? Throw open the doors . . . Good morning, gentlemen. Ah! Metternich, how is your august master? I am glad. So long as your country shall keep faith with me, all is well. Why, Rapp, I have not seen you for a week? Which old wound? So Dr. Corvisart says it will soon be right? What, hard up again? What you soldiers do with your money passes my comprehension. You have had eight hundred thousand francs from me this year already, and yet you are in debt! Meneval, make out an order on the Treasury for a quarter of a million francs in favour of General Rapp, and bring it here for me to sign at once. If the general wastes his money, he is equally prodigal of his blood . . .

'Well, Prince of Ponte-Corvo, what can I do for you? Is Désirée well? Dangerous fellow that—never satisfied . . .

'No, Prince of Benevento, I do not contemplate as yet making any change in my general policy. Should I do so, I will communicate with you . . . Ah! Junot, my son, how are you? What's that? Now, keep calm, begin at the beginning, speak slowly, and let me have all the facts as they occurred. . . . Did you say Bistole? I remember the man well. He was with me in Egypt. I must see to this at once. Gentlemen, the audience is over. Constant, my horse. Junot, you and Rapp will attend me . . .

'Soldiers, the Duc d'Abrantes, in his capacity of Governor of Paris, reports that one of your corporals struck his colonel yesterday. Colonel Ardrean, kindly come here to me. You will be good enough to state the circumstances fully. First order the prisoner forward under guard . . .

'Now, prisoner, what may you have to say? . . . So! Colonel, kindly ask the adjutant to bring me this man's record . . . Fourteen years' service . . . Wounded at Montenotte, wounded at St. Jean d'Acre . . . good Heavens . . . Wounded at Marengo, the first man to reach the Heights of Pratzen . . . Soldier, how dare you strike your superior officer? You, you, you, who have been with me from the very beginning? Do you know the military law condemns you to be shot? And you have no black mark but this? . . . Colonel Ardrean, a quiet word with you . . . I thank you, Colonel, and I shall remember your consideration of me.

'Corporal Bistole, your crime is such that no apology or promises of amendment can interfere with due punishment . . .

' Corporal Bistole, I degrade you from your honourable office in the army of France, and I reduce you to the ranks . . .

' Private Bistole, I dismiss you from the service of our common country . . .

' Stay! Bring that man back.

' Paul Bistole, for your services in the campaigns of Italy and Egypt, for your wounds received whilst carrying the arms of France, for your glorious bravery at Austerlitz, I reinstate you in the ranks of the army. Private Bistole, I advance you to the rank of corporal in the 9th regiment of infantry, now serving in Spain. You will go with the battalion of Grenadiers which leaves Paris to-morrow . . .

' Colonel and officers of the 78th, I bid you good-day . . . Oh! You think I have done well, Rapp, eh? These soldiers of mine require delicate handling, but I know them. Come, let us return . . .

' What is it, Constant? The Council of State is waiting? Let the usher announce me . . .

' Gentlemen, your suggestion that there being no heir of my body is a source of anxiety to the nation merits my attention. Have you considered the many difficulties in the position? They are not all easily discernible, believe me. To clear the ground, let me tell you at once that there is no sacrifice from which I shall shrink, should the State require it . . . Constant, my hat. Good-day, gentlemen . . .

' Ah, Monsieur de Rémusat, I did not see you at the reception this morning. Come and take a stroll with me through the gardens . . . Do you know, Rémusat, I miss something in you to which I was accustomed in our earlier years together. You seem dull. Your face no longer brightens up at my approach. Now, what is it? Ah! I have it! It was that cursed business of the Duc d'Enghien. Now, look here, I will tell you all about that matter. . . .

' So, Rémusat, you see that only in one respect could any blame be possibly attached to me, and that was in having the Duke arrested in a foreign State. Still, the circumstances justified even that. It struck terror into the Bourbons. Reflect on this. There has not been a particle of trouble with the old Royal family since. Come, let us return . . .

' Constant, coffee. Meneval, bring me the army report that came last night. Josephine, I beg that you will desist from constantly disturbing me in this way. Look at this report. It is ninety pages long, and I simply *must* get through it before three o'clock.

Now, don't be vexed ; I will come to your reception this evening at six.

'Um—um—Eugène does very well. I wish I could knock some of his downright common-sense into the others. Davoust—good. Bessières, very good. Lannes, ah, this is worth reading. Very, very good. If anything happened to that man, my heart would break. Vandamme—um—um—Lasalle . . .

'Meneval, write to General Lasalle. He is to call Private Cadeau, No. 134291, of the 29th Regiment, on parade, and to announce that the Emperor has bestowed the Cross of the Legion of Honour upon him for his gallant conduct at Jena, together with a pension of two thousand francs. Stay—alter that—make it twelve hundred francs. We must economise everywhere we can with safety . . .

'Write to the Superintendent of the powder factory at Lyons. Tell him that I am very much disappointed with his output . . .

'Well, Duc d'Otranto, what is fresh ? Oh, don't bother me with the tittle-tattle of the old aristocracy. No, I won't take care. If an assassin cares to risk his own life, he may try for mine. I am more secure, standing unprotected in the streets of Paris, than any man. The days of the infernal machine have gone for ever . . .

'Constant, ask his Highness the Prince of Neuchâtel to come in. . . .

'So, Prince, it's three o'clock. Have you the maps ready ? Meneval, please bring me my compasses and the table of logarithms . . . Now, Berthier, I want you to write to General Bertrand, giving him the fullest and most detailed instructions as to his command on the River Vistula. He is to look up the location and character of every ford and bridge for a hundred miles both below and above his present position.

'Instruct him that until further orders it is imperative that he post a courier to me here in Paris each morning and evening. Copy your letter in the usual course, Marshal.

'Constant ! Ask the Duc de Friuli to favour me with his presence . . .

'Well, Duke, what do you say to half an hour on horseback ? Good . . .

'This open air, Duke, keeps a man well, and then, work never kills. What would kill me would be to be interfered with by a superior or superiors. I am the hardest-worked man in France ? Perhaps so. She has conferred great powers on me, but only

that I may use them to her benefit and glory. I shall justify her confidence.

'By the bye, is a staff of nine window-cleaners a necessity? I should think two men could clean all the windows in the Palace in a day. See what you can do, and let me have a report by to-morrow.

'Duroc, we are on the eve of great events. I know you don't talk, so I can tell you that I am now resolved on a divorce. France must have a successor on whom to fall back, should anything happen to me. My brothers? One cannot imagine any of them on the throne of Charlemagne. There will be fearful trouble with Josephine, but I have made up my mind . . . You might keep an eye on Talleyrand. He talks too much to Josephine and Hortense. Of course, I tell them next to nothing, but he is crafty enough to guess a great deal from a very little . . .

'Are you still friendly with Bourrienne? You might see him, as though accidentally, and let him know that I have something in view for him; you understand.

'Duke, I am not satisfied with the present system of the food supply at the Palace. Is a proper check kept, so that when a bill comes in I may know that I have had all the articles charged? Is everything weighed and counted? I think that from the end of this year you had better arrange for three or four of the leading houses in each department to quote prices for the next year's supply . . .

'Listen to those bells! Calling the faithful to what they term evensong, I suppose. France owes me many great debts, Duke, but I am beginning to believe that the Concordat was my master-stroke of policy . . . Ah! If only I could transfer the seat of the Papacy to Paris! Well, had enough? Come along then . . .

'Meneval, destroy the letter you have written to Lasalle. Alter it to this effect, that I have appointed Private Cadeau to be an officer of the Legion of Honour, but that in his case the Cross is not being sent to him, as the Emperor desires to place it on his bosom with his own hands. By Heaven, Meneval, but that will fairly set the army on fire. Tell Lasalle to send Cadeau to Paris in time for the review of the infantry on the 30th inst. Drop the pension to nine hundred francs . . .

'Constant! Here, change me quickly. I am due at the Empress' reception . . .

'Good evening, ladies. Good evening, gentlemen. Ah!

Marshal Dûre of Valmy, I don't often see you nowadays! Still re-fighting your glorious charge at Marengo? Yes, I know the lies Bourrienne tells about it. Don't let them trouble you . . . I know you, and I know him . . .

'Well, Talma, my old friend! Anything fresh? Yes, I suppose you do have a lot of trouble with the ladies of your theatre. Thank your gods you have not to deal with the Marshals of France.

'Give it me, Constant. Josephine, you will have to excuse me. Here is a most important despatch from Marshal Brune. Good evening, all . . .

'Meneval, write to Marshal Brune. See you give him his titles in full. You can sign. . . .

"His Majesty the Emperor has received your despatch of the 15th ulto., No. 1015, and is much dissatisfied with the condition of the 14th, 16th, and 19th regiments as reported by you. You are 19 men short in the 14th regiment, 7 men short in the 16th regiment and 32 men short in the 19th regiment. According to your report, No. 627 of the 4th ulto., you were then at full strength in these bodies. There is no indication in your present despatch as to loss from sickness, accident, or desertion.

"The Emperor reminds you that on the day of the capitulation of Ulm he directed you to submit a detailed account of any shortages, with their causes, as early as discovered. With regard to deserters, you are instructed to have them shot immediately after conviction. The man who betrays his country is unfit to live. . . ."

It's a trifle stern, Meneval. Perhaps you had better conclude with some general expressions of my esteem. No, write it from me, and I will sign it with the others, and don't forget the "May God" sentence . . .

'Constant, inquire of the usher if Dr. Corvisart is still in the Empress' reception-room, and if so, bring him here . . .

'Well, doctor, what's my complaint now? So? So? It is no use telling me that. I revel in work. It is my delight, my all. I am never better than when slaving eighteen or twenty hours a day. You must understand that I am not as other men are.

'Corvisart, I want you to do me a favour. Can you get me a complete account of the climatic conditions of Russia? I don't mean merely of St. Petersburg, or Moscow, but of *all* Russia. What is the clothing best suitable for the various seasons there? . . .

'Meneval, put a note in the diary for this day week: "Should receive Dr. Corvisart's report." Thank you, doctor. Good evening to you.

'Constant, when that bottle of physic comes in, throw it away.

'You can tell Mdlle. Georges, Constant, that I am engaged with the Russian Ambassador, and that I have not left any message with you for her . . . Constant, coffee. What would you like, Meneval? Sherbet for Baron de Meneval, Constant. You seem very fond of sherbet, Mr. Secretary! I? I am fond of nothing. Stay, I will be frank with you. I do not allow myself to become fond of anything, for fear of it possibly obscuring my judgment. My one fondness—but it is more than that, it is passion—is for France. France, my glorious France, my beautiful France! Thou hast never betrayed me. Let me have length of days, and see to what heights I shall raise thee!

'Certainly, ask the Duc d'Abrantes to come in . . .

'Now, Junot, it is no use your grumbling. Come in my private room here. I have something to say for your ear alone . . .

'You are dissatisfied; well, so am I. You are a general, but not a marshal. Let me tell you that I appoint as marshals men who can handle a hundred thousand troops with ease. Do you dare to tell me that you can do so?

'You say that I have never given you a real chance of distinguishing yourself? Well, let us see. When I first knew you, you were a penniless sergeant. Your pay was 25 francs a month. Now you are a general, a duke, married to one of the loveliest women in the world, Governor of Paris, altogether in a position which every general in the army envies! To whom is this marvellous change due? To you or to me? . . .

'Constant, light the Duc d'Abrantes out! . . .

'How I wish that Eugène were my own son! France might accept him as it is. If I have to put Josephine on one side, I shall have to be very careful with Eugène. Still, he is a good lad. Never complains, always grateful, always obedient, always zealous. He would know that I had to do it, and only did it, for France . . . France, thou shalt be great. I will make thee so powerful that the remotest savage shall tremble at thy name. Thou shalt stand before all time, as the realisation of order, of prosperity, of security. To be a citizen of France shall be accounted man's noblest title. Thy sons shall dominate the earth. Thy manu-

factures and thy arts shall clothe and refine all mankind. Thy commerce shall extend in ever widening bounds. Curse those English . . . They would put France under foot. But let me have a little time. Let me get my system of blockade in full work, and I will then build a navy that shall cover the seas, north and south, east and west.

‘No, Josephine, I won’t come to your room to-night. It is ten now, and I have eaten nothing since breakfast. Constant is getting me a little supper, and I shall be in bed in five minutes. It is hard, I know, but what can I do? Good night, beloved. I shall always love you . . .

‘Give me these boots again the day after to-morrow, Constant. They seem satisfactory. Wake me at one o’clock. The post-master is coming then with the letters. Better wake me at twelve and have a hot bath ready. That new eau de Cologne is no good. Get a supply of the old kind. Good-night. Close the door gently . . .

‘France . . . France . . . France . . .’

JOHN DARRAH.

THE NEW PARENTS' ASSISTANT.¹

IV.

THE USE OF GRANDPARENTS.

THE baby's first thought is for us ; he is no sooner created than he creates us father, mother, uncle, aunt, grandpapa, and grandmama. Each of us obtains a title, from this fount of honour not yet one minute old : our names are in his Royal Gazette, long before the doctor is out of the house. It is a pretty act of condescension ; the young Sovereign's first exercise of his supremacy ; he ennobles us all round, then and there, before he has had time to breathe. Perhaps the subsequent cry is from a sudden sense of dismay and vain regret : he realises, too late, what he has done. Why did he create uncle Robert, who hates babies ; and aunt Sophia, with her virulent notions of diet, her bacteriological evidences against the use of a dummy ? It is too late now : he has made the appointments, and they are irrevocable.

None of us can afford to despise or refuse these birthday honours. Observe the school-boy uncle, the school-girl aunt ; their affected levity, their secret pride : hear the boy, next term, back at school—*I say, you fellows, I'm an uncle*. It is the ugliest word in our language ; even phonetic spelling could not make it worse. Still, to be an uncle is to be in office ; it is a position of unquestionable dignity. I have held it for more than thirty years, under many nephews and nieces who have shown me tokens of their confidence : I have nothing to say against the avuncular service. But the duties of the post are ill-defined ; and though we continue to the end as honorary uncles, we retire early, at the height of our consulting practice, from active work ; we tend, after fifty, to be not *My uncle*, but merely *One of my father's brothers*. Besides, uncles, like godparents, are well-nigh useless in a model family ; and in a family which is not model, their interference is apt to be resented. Ye uncles and aunts, be content, and more than content, that you are seldom wanted.

But uncles and aunts are the least important members of this peerage. Father and Mother come first, immediately after Royalty, like the Archbishop of Canterbury. Then Grandpapa and Grandmama ; then, *longo intervallo*, uncles and aunts, and a

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drift of cousins. None below the rank of Grandparent has the right to bear capital letters, or to come into the nursery without knocking.

The title of Grandparent is magniloquent, enforcing attention like deep harmony. It is more than a word uttered, it is a motive given out. Contrast its fine seriousness with the trivial uncle-and-aunt theme: you are in two different worlds. Or contrast the reverence of Art toward grandparents with her contempt for the whole clan of uncles and aunts. What artist has ever found inspiration in them? But the grandmother holds her own in some of the best pictures in this country: for example, the big Francia in the National Gallery. Never mind the quartette of attendant saints, and the foolish little St. John in the foreground; see only the group on the throne—Grandmother, Mother, and Child. It was an altar-picture, and the Mother, I think, is looking not at the Child, but out of the picture; but the Grandmother is intent on the Child, and holds out a fruit to him, and he nearly over-balances himself, reaching after it—oh, these grandmothers, how they spoil the children, always giving them things to eat—but her face, radiant with self-unconsciousness, is faultless in beauty.

To find the use of grandparents, we must carefully examine them. It is a hard subject, and has not received much attention. The experimental psychologists, Heaven be praised, have neglected it: parentage so engrosses the mind of Science, that none will study grandparentage. As, in the hall of a country-house, the hostess puts a jig-saw puzzle, that her guests may try to piece it together, so Nature puts before us her problems of parents and children; and we always have to leave, long before the puzzle is done; but she takes no interest in problems of grandparents. They are no longer engaged in the perpetuation of the species: and that is generally supposed to be all that she cares for. Thus, they might fairly be called supernatural: for they come neither into eugenics nor into Freud's unholy method of psycho-analysis.

They begin so late in life, that we must examine them at the moment of inception. In the final years, they are less instructive: it is the brand-new grandparent who best repays observation. Take therefore this man and this woman who to-night, for the first time in their life, are grandpapa and grandmama; and have a good look at them. Do not think it amiss that they are unable to assort themselves at once to the sudden change. For they are at the mercy of opposed influences: they are like Garrick in

the picture, wavering between Tragedy and Comedy. They feel younger; they feel older. But he, on that eventful night, in comparison with her, is a commonplace figure. He is thinking of himself, and of his new title; he is making good resolutions, and visualising all that should accompany old age: let him go home, calling the stars and the scudding clouds to witness that he is a grandfather. The nursery, that hot little room, flushed with pride that it has got a tenant, does not want him. For he is only a man: he never had, in her sense of the word, children of his own; he only had, in his sense of the word, hers. But she—well, you know what she is; what a way she always has with all babies. But to-night it is more than that: I cannot find the right phrases for what it is, but there it is. The new baby, somehow, though it is not hers, yet is hers: she might be its mother, from the way she behaves; it seems to revive in her that passion which was in her at the coming of her own babies; she would like to nurse it herself, if she could; she is one, through her child, with her child's child; she loves it as if it had been conceived and born of her. He is admiring the fact that he is a grandfather: she is possessed, body and soul, by the sense that she has a grandchild.

What we call Time—our habitual reticence makes us poetical—will take the edge off this contrast. Ten years hence, if they live so long, they will be less unlike than they are to-night. But to the end she will show signs of her primal nature. Age will seem to have made her placid, matter of fact, dead to mere instinct; then one more grandchild will come along, and immediately the embers of her sex will glow again in her, to the astonishment of her juniors. It is a common belief among the young that youth is complex, impulsive, and incalculable, and old age is easy to analyse, estimate, and explain; and they are surprised and offended when they discover the falseness of this belief. Who would have thought the old lady to have had so much love to pour out for her grandchildren? You were of opinion that you had accounted for her, that you could foretell her moves and impulses; and look at her now, over her tenth grandchild, just look at her.

So hard are the difficulties of studying other people, that I have well-nigh ceased to attempt it: life is too short for it: the saying *He knew what was in man* was not written of the likes of me. And the older we are, the harder, not the easier, we are to understand. For we are the result of all that has ever been in us: and the older

we are, the more has been in us. Even the portrait of old age, in a picture-gallery, may be undecipherable :

' As one stands before one of Rembrandt's portraits of old age ; as one looks and looks at the face, harassed, furrowed, worn with all the cares, the failures, the ambitions, the disappointments, the decisions, the renunciations, the humiliation and endurance and discipline of an inscrutable past ; as one guesses at what has been unlearned and learnt, lost and won, in the battle of life '—

And we the living, are we more easily deciphered ? If I knew what was in man, I would not waste my time writing about him : I would just sit here and create him.

Now, from this fact, that grandparents are mostly bewildering and inexplicable, I have to fashion a working-theory of their use. That they are useless I cannot believe ; they must be of some use, or they would not be here ; they are of the body of the family : it is impossible that they should be wholly useless. Shall I therefore liken them to vestigial structures, feebly useful, retained in the body, mere survivals, belonging to the past ?

I shall not get my working-theory of them on those lines. I must deduce their use, not from what they were, but from what they are ; not from any evidence in them of past activity, but from their present incalculable temperament. I must be persuaded that it is their impulsive behaviour now, which completes and ensures the health and strength of the home-life.

I would liken them, with all respect, of those bodily organs which are called the ductless glands : for example, the thyroid and pituitary glands. The use of these, when I was a medical student, was not known. They had no ducts ; they did not seem to contribute to the general welfare of the body. Glands with ducts, such as the liver and the pancreas, were intelligible ; we knew what they were doing ; they were the regular ratepayers of the body ; but the ductless glands, to all appearance, put nothing into the currency of the blood, manufactured nothing, spent nothing. They just lay low, defying the Professor of Physiology to say what they were for. Then came that magnificent series of researches—it is of the happiness of my life that I know some of the men who made them—which proved that these glands secrete, and put straight into the blood, what is needful for the balancing of life. Note that Luschka, about 1880, said that the use of our thyroid glands is to improve the outline of our necks : grandparents, likewise,

are thought by some people to be more decorative than functional. Whereas, our thyroid glands are incessantly making and distributing through the body, from the crown of its head to the tips of its toes, a substance of most subtle composition and of most amazing potency. The active principle of this 'internal secretion' is a ferment: and we know that a very little ferment goes a very long way. Indeed, in some cases, where the thyroid is over-active, there is grave unrest of the nervous system—what is called 'hyper-thyroidism.' Yet, without these ferments, the health of the body cannot be kept up. They are wonderful in the swiftness of their action, the spread of their leavening. Among ferments which come from without, think of snake-venom; or of the juice of cursed hebenon, which *courses through the natural gates and alleys of the body*, producing all over it a *most instant tetter*. But I am thinking of ferments which come from within, home-made ferments. The least excess, or the least deficiency, in the supply of these internal secretions, may be injurious to health; but a proper supply of them is essential to health.

So it is with grandparents. They complete the fulness of the home-life; they maintain the balance of its constituent forces, the fruitful diversity of its interests, the perfect exercise of its purposes. As, in a monkey, removal of the thyroid gland causes myxœdema, a kind of cretinism, so in a family the removal of the grandparents—I assume, of course, that they were acting properly—causes, more or less, myxœdema: it tends to make home slow, irresponsive, chilly, non-venturesome. The home-life has been deprived of a ferment. You may be able to cure the monkey, giving it extract of thyroid gland from a sheep; but there is no substitute for grandparents.

Observe, that they contribute to the family-body nothing ponderable or bulky, no food-stuffs; but a mere trace of an invisible agent more dynamical than words can say. In excess, it would set up hyper-thyroidism, jangling the nerves and hurrying the pulse of the home-life. In default, it would let the heavy clouds of myxœdema dull the mind of the home-life, chill its initiative spirits, and retard its movements. In due proportion, it adjusts the balance of home: I will call no family of young children complete which has neither grandpapa nor grandmama.

Make allowance for them, by the light of this parable; make the best of them, while they are not yet old enough to be inert. Their little interferences and subterfuges, and their way of com-

paring notes and laying plans and running in and out, and their suggestions and their prophecies—regard it all as part of the healthy metabolism of the home-life. Think what it must feel like to be a ferment, a catalytic agent: that is to say, a volcanic sort of substance which cannot do anything without upsetting something. No wonder they are troublesome.

Only, of this be sure, that they are, indeed and in truth, not destructive but constructive. That which they upset, they up-build. In the gradual and hazardous alchemy of the home-life, they are always breaking one group of atoms to make another; and that which they make has its uses, no less than that which they break. Without them, in the long run, the home-life would be not richer but poorer. By their restlessness it is steadied; by their instability it is established; by their emotional and expansive waste of themselves its fabric is knit close, its complexity balanced, its adaptability held at a wholesome width. That is what it is to be a ferment.

Poor little parable, sit down: for you must be tired out. Aid me, O Muse of Unpretentious Prose, Thou tenth and least accessible of all. I say that every allowance must be made for grandparents. I admit that they are, like the rest of mankind, imperfect instruments; they have to be tuned from time to time. The reference here is to Amelia Osborne, and the trouble that she had with her parents. Old Mr. Sedley 'was disposed to spoil little Georgy, sadly gorging the boy with apples and parliament, to the detriment of his health—until Amelia declared that George should never go out with his grandpapa, unless the latter promised solemnly, and on his honour, not to give the child any cakes, lollipops or stall-produce whatever.' It was even worse, when she caught her mother, in the days of little George's infancy, dosing him with Daffy's Elixir:

'Amelia, the gentlest and sweetest of every-day mortals, when she found this meddling with her maternal authority, thrilled and trembled all over with anger. Her cheeks, ordinarily pale, now flushed up, until they were as red as they used to be when she was a child of twelve years old. She seized the baby out of her mother's arms, and then grasped at the bottle, leaving the old lady gaping at her, furious, and holding the guilty teaspoon.

'Amelia flung the bottle crashing into the fireplace. "I will not have baby poisoned, mamma," cried Emmy, rocking the infant about violently with both her arms, and turning with flashing eyes at her mother.

" "Poisoned, Amelia!" said the old lady; "this language to me?"' . . .

Then came the pitiful quarrel; and on the next page, 'Till the termination of her natural life, this breach between Mrs. Sedley and her daughter was never thoroughly mended.' But we must not confound the spoiling of a child's stomach with the spoiling of a child's soul. Not one of ten thousand grandparents is guilty of the offence of soul-spoiling. Besides, the word cuts both ways. Did not Mr. Fairchild spoil Henry and Emily worse than Mr. Sedley spoiled George? To make children grim, conventional, non-imaginative—is not that to spoil them?

And for the minor offences of young and promising grandparents there are excuses, which may be lame, yet are able to stand. Consider it thus. Man and wife, in the later middle years, are apt, now and again, to find the house of life rather too calm. They feel a bit lonely; they miss those out in the world whom they still call the children. Moreover, they are beginning, or have begun, to feel old. They are fond of deciding, in rooms larger than they want now, and full of accumulated furniture, which of the children shall have what; they teach to each other the stiff sentences of old age, such as, *When I'm gone*. The slowness of their days vexes them, for they do not know how long they have to live. He so talks of the sword of Damocles that she says, at last, that she is sick to death of the sword of Damocles; forthwith, she taps wood: not to avert the omen of the uttered word, of course not; she was just vexed with him for the moment: that sword is most formidable when it is far off. Into this not unhappy but uneventful life a grandchild comes, *scattering the past about*, and crying *I am fire and air*. What pleasure it is for them to hold the baby in their arms. It is the very making of them. Animals, even the most anthropoid apes, draw the line at their immediate offspring; dogs and cattle have no instinctive love toward their grandpuppies and grandcalves. But these fantastical baby-worshippers have their feet on the one straight line of three generations; and are thinking of living to see the fourth. They cannot keep their hands off the baby, nor their hearts either; they bring Magian gifts, and find it hard to return to their own country.

Besides, they are persons of experience; they are full of advice, and it is valuable, almost all of it. Is Grandmama to remain silent when the baby weighs no more to-day than it weighed last Saturday? Is Grandpapa to take no part in the choice, over the cradle, of the baby's school, college, and professional career?

They went through it all, with Bob and Alice and Barbara ; all that Bob and Elizabeth, Alice and Dick, Barbara and William have got to go through. Therefore, play up to them ; let them make themselves, or think themselves, immensely useful, while they can. For, if they live long enough—I am not sure that I wish it for them—the time of uselessness will come on them, till, at the last, they are hardly more than instances of persistent vitality. I would not wait till then to honour them ; I would honour them now ; not for their advancing age, but for their enduring youth. There is no lack of people to praise the four-score years : I praise the young grandparents who take themselves so seriously that they have to laugh at themselves for being so serious. Make allowance for them, remembering that they still are father-in-law and mother-in-law ; do not ask them to resign lightly these formidable offices ; leave them to the gentleness of Time, who will one day put them, if they live long enough, on the shelf. But here I have to explain, for the assistance of parents who are on their way to it, what the shelf is.

There is a thread, no thicker than a hair, slung over the space between birth and death : one thread for each of us ; but, of course, they are convergent. And before you come to the end of your thread, the cliff, advancing to meet you, juts out so close that a ledge of rock is immediately under your thread ; and here you can rest, but not for long, before you go on. This ledge of rock is called *The Shelf* : and when you have got thus far, those behind you, each of them on his or her own thread, watching you ahead of them, say that you are on the shelf, or that it is time that you were there. From where they are, it is impossible for them to see the final stretch of your thread : the cliff juts out too sharply for that. Nor is it possible for you, from where you are : there is a corner which you cannot see round. All that you know is, that you are not yet at the end : there is one bit more to cross ; meanwhile, you have the shelf under your feet. It is none too comfortable ; it is hard and narrow, and it strikes cold, with a foretaste of the mainland where all our threads end together. Still, it is firm under you ; and you are delivered, for a time, from the sense of insecurity which you had on the swaying thread.

That is what *The Shelf* is : if only people would stop to think. Mostly, they are content to imagine the top-shelf of a bookcase, where dull books, unread but not worth selling, are out of the way and are forgotten ; or the top-shelf of a cupboard, convenient for rubbish of broken crockery, cast-off garments, emptied boxes.

Or with more imagination they see a crematorium, with lines of funeral urns, shelf above shelf; ashes, least personal of all relics, yards of pigeon-holed ashes; or, mere relics of relics, a line of labelled mummies behind glass doors. None of these is The Shelf: it is no abandonment of ourselves to lethargy; it is the poignant experience of stepping off our threads to a foothold of hazardous rock, for a little, that we may recover our strength before we go thence to the mainland. On The Shelf, we are alert in every nerve, and feel the life, what is left of it, in every limb. Some of us are proud of being there, some of us are sorry; all of us are kindly interested in ourselves, in each other, and in those who are coming toward us: our hearts beat quick, for it was hard work to attain thus far: and the last stretch is waiting for us, and the wind is against us. Here, just long enough to get our breath, on this precipitous edge, this *shoal and bank of time*, we hesitate, knowing this only, that we cannot stop where we are.

Another chair, please: another parable has fainted. Perhaps the meeting had better be adjourned. But I hope that I may be allowed one minute more. It is true that grandparents are hungry for the utmost measure of sympathy; they cannot bear to feel that they are not consulted, not wanted; they long to be in everything that is happening; and they require, and they deserve, if it were only out of pity, a very generous measure of regard, a very careful display of attention, from their married children. But they must remember—it is not always pleasant, but they must—that a man and his wife belong to each other, and to nobody else. I cannot put it more gently than that; nor, I think, more brutally than the marriage-service: which makes short work of his and her parents, will have nothing to say to them, will even let an outsider give this woman to be married to this man. *She was yours, she is his*: that is all that the marriage-service has to say to her parents. It shuts them down, it cuts them off, it hardly knows whether they are there; it recognises no home, save that which it is creating; no parents, save them whom it is joining together; no children, save them which are yet unborn. And the moral is, that grandparents must learn the hardest and wisest of all the arts of love, the consummate art of self-effacement. That is what I was just going to say when we were interrupted. I beg to move that the meeting be adjourned. Those in favour? Contrary? Carried unanimously.

STEPHEN PAGET.

SPRAGGE'S CANYON.¹

BY HORACE ANNESLEY VACHELL.

CHAPTER XVII.

DISLOCATION.

I.

MRS. SPRAGGE explained Wilbur's visit, when George returned home. Her object was to prevent the two men meeting; and she reflected with grim humour that Mr. Stocker might be feeling even more nervous than herself. She said to George in her sober, matter-of-fact tones:

'Mr. Stocker jest hed ter call around. I'm expectin' the half of Aguila this afternoon.'

'But why did Hazel see him alone?'

'Why, Georgie, you never thought I'd go agen the doc., did ye? He sez to me: "Let her hev her own way in small things."'

'Mr. Stocker is—small,' said George, 'very small, but the idea of Hazel seein' him alone in her room, in bed too—!'

'Propped up in bed, and wearin' the purtiest dressin'-jacket. I aimed ter let the child hev her own way. She's allers hed it. Mebbe, she wanted to send a message by Mr. Stocker to her Auntie.'

'That's so,' said George.

'I won't ask him to stay to dinner. Now, my son, I'd be easier in mind if you caught them snakes.'

'You ain't scared o' them?'

'Hazel is, dear. Put 'em back into the tank. There's no kind o' sense in killin' 'em. Mebbe, they'll help buy another dressin'-jacket.'

'I ain't goin' ter kill 'em,' said George.

He went into his room. Crotalines were on the move, wriggling about, and quite ready to show fight, if molested. George opened the window which looked on the porch. He had caught two snakes and dropped them into the tank, when he heard Wilbur descend the stairs. A minute later he could hear his mother taking polite leave of Hazel's visitor, and asking him perfunctorily to 'call

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again.' Wilbur promised to do so. He passed out of the front door, on his way to the buggy, and saw George at the window.

'Mornin',' said George.

'Good morning, Mr. Spragge. Very upsetting affair this?'

'Very,' replied George. 'Like to step in, Mr. Stocker, and have a howdy?'

Wilbur hesitated.

'I'm catchin' the rattlers,' said George, in his most imperturbable voice. 'Mebbe it would interest you some to see me at it.'

'I will not disturb you,' replied Wilbur hastily. 'I'll call again to-morrow morning to inquire.'

'Good,' said George.

He went on catching the snakes till he had secured them all. By this time dinner was ready, but he had received no message from Hazel. Mrs. Spragge told him that she was resting, adding:

'I dessay she needs it, after Mr. Stocker's talk. Wonnerful talker, he is! We'll eat dinner alone, Georgie. I've got Samanthy into bed at last.'

'Samanthy,' remarked George solemnly, 'is a dyed-in-the-wool Spragge. I've followed her trail, an' now—I *know*.'

Mother and son dined together in silence, each absorbed in thought.

II.

Soon after dinner, Mrs. Bungard drove over in Mrs. Geldenheimer's buggy, and George tried in vain to evade the questions of two inquisitive women. This, of course, was part of Mrs. Spragge's carefully devised plan. She remained upstairs with the patient; Samantha lay in bed; George therefore, sorely against his will, was constrained to entertain the visitors. Unhappily, he had not acquired the habit of lying. He loathed the necessity of 'giving away' Hazel, but the horrid fact was soon established that a charming young lady from Oakland had poked her nose into Bluebeard's Chamber. Mrs. Geldenheimer treated the indiscretion lightly; Mrs. Bungard sniffed, as she murmured with disagreeable emphasis:

'Well, all said and done, I'm *surprised*!'

George felt easier when his visitors began to praise Samantha. Mrs. Bungard remarked mournfully:

'I do hope and pray that she ain't sucked any of the venom into her system. There's always that danger.'

George was visibly impressed, wondering whether Samantha's retreat to bed might be caused by trouble more serious than mere fatigue and excitement. Mrs. Bungard added :

'We couldn't spare Samantha.'

Obviously, it might be inferred that Mrs. Spragge could spare Hazel. This festered. George respected public opinion, although he never kow-towed to it. In Aguila, the ex-school-marm directed and voiced public opinion. She might be deemed hard and exacting, but none questioned her sincerity and honesty. George remembered Mrs. Bungard's austere compressed lips when Hazel failed to 'make good' upon the cliff.

Worse followed !

With a gay laugh, Mrs. Geldenheimer put into words the thought gnawing mercilessly at George's vitals.

'My ! How she will hate this place !'

'How do you know that ?' growled George.

'Because I'm a woman, and city raised. When I first came here, Mr. Spragge, I was scared to death of the coyotes and the horned toads. If a rattler had bit me, I'd have left Mr. Geldenheimer there and then.'

'You would,' observed Mrs. Bungard, 'for good and all. It ain't likely that Samantha would have been around.'

Presently the ladies drove off, taking with them enough authentic gossip to keep their tongues wagging for a week. George hurried upstairs. At Samantha's door he paused, listening. Then he tapped softly. Samantha's smooth voice was pleasant to hear.

'What is it ?'

'It's me—George. Say, Samantha, how air you makin' it ?'

'I'm lyin' here jest ter please Aunt Almiry. Mind you strip that red cow.'

'You ain't got any pizon into yer system, hev ye ?'

'What pizon ?'

'Rattlesnake pizon. You ain't got a sore place in yer mouth ?'

'No.'

'Any bad teeth ?'

'Not a one.'

'I reckon it's all right, but Mis' Bungard scared me. You jest stay in bed fer a week o' Sundays if you feel like it. Would you fancy anything fer yer supper ? A trout, or a broiler ?'

'Mercy ! I'd be ashamed ter lie a-bed, and eat there ! Go milk my cows.'

He lingered for one more moment.

'Say, Samantha?'

'Well?'

'Yer the goods.'

He turned away, glancing at Hazel's door, and coughing to attract attention, hoping that the door would open, and that his mother would summon him in. If Hazel could see that Stocker—! A dull resentment began to burn within him. He pictured Hazel, propped up in bed, a sweet but piteous figure. He was longing to kiss and comfort her. He wanted to feel once more her kisses.

Why didn't she send for him? Was she afraid of him?

III.

Mrs. Spragge heard his heavy step upon the stairs. She glanced derisively at her patient. The pretty dressing-jacket had been removed. Hazel was resting quietly, but not asleep. After Wilbur's departure she was able to take a little solid food. Her foot was still exceedingly painful and swollen, but unquestionably she was mending rapidly.

'George wants to see you,' said Mrs. Spragge.

'He'll be so angry.'

'Because you peeked into his room?'

'Yes.'

'You needn't to worry about that, dear. Better see him fer a minute, an' git it over. Then, mebbe, ye'll be able ter sleep.'

'Perhaps I'd do well to see him.'

'I think so. It's tough on him.'

'Please pull up the blind. And—and tell George how very weak I am.'

Mrs. Spragge found George near the corral, and beckoned to him.

'She ain't worse?'

'She's doin' fine. You go up fer a short spell.'

'Does she want me to go up?'

'She sent me fer ye. She's mighty near petered out, George. Go slow with her. She thinks yer mad with her.'

'Mad? I am mad, jest crazy fer her.'

Should she warn him? She decided not to do so. Hazel, she felt assured, would provoke no scene. Samantha had been right. It was 'up' to Hazel to 'fix' George. She would take her own time about it, pursue a policy of masterly inactivity.

Safe in Oakland with the man of her deliberate choice, she would accomplish the final 'fixing.'

'I'll be in the kitchen,' said Mrs. Spragge.

George hurried into the house.

Meanwhile, Hazel had heartened herself up by the exercise of a philosophy which had served her faithfully in other somewhat similar emergencies. She lacked, it is true, physical courage, but fortitude of mind she reckoned to be an inalienable possession. Habitually that mind dwelt upon the brighter side of things.

'Laugh, and the world laughs with you.

Weep, and you weep alone.'

Mrs. Ella Wheeler Wilcox's famous injunction had been familiar to her since childhood. She knew that Auntie mine spoke of her to others as a sunbeam. She had illumined—at any rate temporarily—many lives.

She would add sparkle and brilliancy to the life of Wilbur Stocker.

This beautiful thought sustained her, when she prepared to meet George. Wilbur needed her more than George. In a sense she was making an immense sacrifice in giving up George, but such renunciation of the flesh stimulated the spirit to finer issues. For the moment, also, her body was weak and in pain. That was the common lot of most women. Let the spirit, therefore, soar like a lark above the pitiful clay.

She divined, moreover, that her misadventure in George's den must discolour his mind and memory, even as it had discoloured her pretty foot. The foot—she was comfortably assured—would recover its velvety whiteness, George's mind would retain an indelible mark. She felt that he would forgive her, but he was not the man to forget. The memory of these squatters for trifles was really uncanny.

She had leapt intuitively to another conviction. George would not leave his hateful Canyon. If he hesitated, with her kisses still warm upon his lips, what likelihood could there be of his considering her wishes after cool reflection?

She was not propped up by pillows when he entered the room. She lay supine, with a sheet tucked beneath her dimpled chin. One small hand was exposed to view.

She wanted George to be shocked and moved by her appearance. He was. The afternoon sun streamed through the open window.

No tinge of colour tinted her white cheeks ; beneath her eyes were purple stains ; her lips might have been the lips of a child who had just died in its sleep.

George approached on tiptoe. He heard her murmur :

'Don't kiss me, George ! Don't excite me ! I feel so weak !'

He took her hand, and pressed it gently.

'Can you forgive me ? I can't forgive myself. I am so afraid of you. You must be—furious.'

'With—you ?'

He fetched a chair, and sat down beside her. She closed her eyes.

'Please pull down the blind.'

He did so. It did not occur to him that it had been raised for a definite purpose. The blind was made of stout green canvas. Somehow George became affected by the twilight. She may have counted upon this. He realised that he was groping his way to a woman's heart through a baffling mist. Hazel's voice, so lifeless, so strangely cold, chilled him. She went on :

'Why did you not tell me about the snakes ?'

A keener ear than his might have detected a semi-tone of petulance. He answered her at some length, clumsily, alluding to her horror of the reptiles in Van Horne's barn. When he finished, she asked another question :

'Why did you go out last night with a rifle ?'

'To get venison for you.'

'Oh !'

Everything became crystal clear. It is fair to add that she felt ashamed of herself, but this increased rather than diminished her resentment at being kept in the dark.

'You might have told me.'

'I reckoned on surprisin' you. Venison ain't quite in season, but I didn't care about that.'

'I see.'

There was a long pause. George remained tongue-tied, unable to follow Hazel's thoughts. Then she said gently :

'I thought you might be doing something wrong, something against the law, something which might stand between you and me. You took me by storm last night, and—and I wanted to make sure.'

He couldn't understand.

'What did you think I was after, Hazel ?'

'It was so silly of me.'

'What did you think I was after?'

He spoke inexorably.

'I—didn't—know. You told me that the squatters in these hills were not quite honest.'

'You thought, mebbe, that I was like 'em—not quite honest.'

She answered weakly:

'I didn't know.'

But he did. His mind worked slowly, far slower than his strong hands. Ironically, he said:

'You thought, mebbe, that I was a bad man.'

'I was silly.'

'Yes; you was.'

She would not look at him, but she felt that he was looking at her, reading her, condemning her. His silence became excruciating. And yet, had she really understood him, she would have known that his heart brimmed over with tenderness, that the appeal of weakness to strength was irresistible, that the one thing which prevented him from taking her small body into his arms was the entreaty not to excite her.

She spoke first:

'Samantha saved my life. The doctor says so.'

'It's a solid fact. Samanthly made good.'

The familiar phrase smote her sensibilities. Hazel thought: 'He means that I have not made good.' Wilbur was incapable of uttering a remark so tactless. She slipped her hand beneath the sheet, a significant shrinking from his touch which he failed to interpret.

'Samantha hates me, George.'

'She tole you—*that*!'

'Of course not. I guessed. I don't blame her. I think her perfectly wonderful. She saved me, because she loved you.'

How could he deny it? The knowledge made him scarlet. Hot within and without.

'Samanthy'd hev done her best anyhow.'

'Oh yes; but this makes it so much more wonderful. She might have let me die.'

'What?'

He spoke incredulously. Hazel had questioned his honesty, and he had felt nothing but pity and perhaps a faint derisive amusement, but this indictment of Samantha filled him with indignation.

'Yer crazy! I know Samantha from the ground up. We was raised together. Ther' ain't a softer heart in these hills, or a braver. She's jest like Maw. Why'—his voice trembled and broke—'if a man dared tell me Samantha might hev left you ter die, I'd—I'd kill him.'

'You ll kill me, if you talk so loud.'

'I'm awful sorry, but Samantha is—Samanthy.'

'Because of that I am going to give you up to her.'

IV.

He became paralysed by consternation and surprise. Beneath drooping lids, she marked the effect of her words. She was quite prepared for a passionate outburst, primal violence, to be controlled and exorcised by sighs, quivering lips, and tears. His reply when it came seemed ridiculous:

'Gee! It's the pizon, or—or the whisky.'

Then he laughed!

But his hands were clenched, and she could see the great muscles of his arms rigid beneath his thin sleeves. The veins stood out upon his forehead. Hazel trembled and thrilled. He might have recaptured her, had he crushed her to him, pouring out the passion which he suppressed for her sake. She faltered:

'You laugh.'

'I was thinkin' o' last night. And ther's another thing. Do you suppose Samantha'd take your leavin's?'

'George, I am too tired, too weak, to argue with you. It has been a dream this past fortnight, but I am awake. You may be right. I am poisoned against Spragge's Canyon, and your ranch is—you.'

He bent forward till his face was close to hers.

'Is that the reason?' he demanded gently.

She temporised.

'Reason enough surely?'

'The only one?'

'N-n-no.'

'Is there another man back o' this?'

Hazel made no reply. She had never given George credit for perspicacity, believing, with urban conceit, that ranchers were dull of wit and comprehension. They are, indeed, amazingly shrewd

in regard to anything which affects their own interests, indifferent rather than stupid only about outside matters.

'Tell me! Is it—Stocker?'

She dared not answer. Can we blame her for hiding behind a woman's greatest bulwark—physical infirmity? She shuddered, closed her eyes, and lay perfectly still. George rose to his feet.

'You have answered me,' he muttered.

She heard the door close behind him.

He had gone quietly—out of the room and out of her life!

A sigh of relief fluttered from her lips.

V.

In the kitchen he found his mother, busy as usual with the simple tasks which had brought happiness and peace. Instantly, she knew that a rupture had taken place. She confronted a furious man with calm, compassionate eyes.

'She's no use fer me, mother.'

The words burst from his lips with devastating violence. Swiftly he continued:

'You left her alone with that dude, that slick talker.'

'I did.'

Would he curse her? She was prepared for anything. Her face hardened into a grim mask; the likeness between them became extraordinary.

'You are glad?'

'I am.'

He moved a step nearer, rigid with rage and indignation.

'Do you think I'm a goin' ter take this lyin' down? Do you think I'm a goin' ter let any woman fool me? Is that what you think?'

'Pshaw! Go down on yer knees, my son, an' thank God because another man has taken a load off ye. She'll be a heavy burden to him, as she was to you when you toted her down the cliff. Yer strong, George, but yer not strong enough to carry Hazel Goodrich. Glad? Yes, I am glad. I'm so glad that I feel like takin' them rattlers back into the chaparral and givin' 'em their freedom.'

Drastic treatment, this! Too drastic, perhaps.

'You don't know all,' he said sullenly. 'Las' night she lay in my arms: her lips was quick to meet mine. She was mine, then, all mine. An' now—*his*!'

'Wal, that ought ter turn yer stomach. Git out, an' be sick ! Throw it up ! Git rid of it fer ever an' ever.'

He answered as grimly as she :

'I'll fix him first.'

'How ?'

'You kin leave that ter me.'

'Kin I ? Not much. It makes me feel mighty mean to hev to tell my son what ter do. I reckoned him big enough ter git along without proppin' from a woman.'

'That'll do.'

'No, ye'll jest hev to hear me out. You stan' thar with yer fists clenched, 'most ready to strike yer own mother. Ye look big as a barn, but ter me ye've dwindled into a baby agen. Yes, you hev. I'm sorry fer ye, George, because it's the first time ye've bin badly hurt, but I thought you was man enough ter take the lickin' ye deserve.'

'That beats all ! *Deserve ! Thunder !*'

'I mean it. You stole Hazel. Stole her from the place whar she belongs, brought her here agen what judgment she may hev. You thought in yer conceit an' fullishness that a spindlin' plant like that'd thrive in our brush hills. But she knows better than you, my son. If she married you an' tried ter live here, she'd die—wilt away. She's bin mighty near death sence she kissed you. I was clost ter death when I bore you, George, an' it opened my eyes, I tell ye.'

She paused, noting the effect of her words. George's face remained sullen and impassive, but she perceived that the muscles of his body had relaxed. She laid her hand upon his shoulder. Her voice softened :

'You take a lesson from Samantha.'

'Samanthy ?'

'Las' night she saw you an' Hazel together. So did I. Mebbe it was the bitt'rest moment of my life. What was it to Samantha ? Think, if you kin, of her feelin's. She loves you jest as you love Hazel. An' she saved Hazel, because she loves you. If you love Hazel good an' true, do what Samantha done. Think of her happiness afore yer own. Let her go to a fittin' mate.' A harsh laugh broke from her. 'An' that, George, will be punishment enough fer Mister Stocker.'

Never had she spoken at such length. When she finished a reaction manifested itself, for the strain upon a woman past middle

life had been very great. How would he respond? Beneath the stress of this poignant anxiety her limbs trembled; tears came into her eyes. She beheld him, as she had said, a baby, the only child that was left. Desperately, she clutched him, thrusting his head down upon her bosom, knowing that a disease more deadly than diphtheria had stricken him, that he too might be taken. Her grip was so fierce that he struggled to release himself. She gripped harder. Suddenly, he ceased struggling; her strength prevailed. She began to murmur his name, crooning to him:

'Georgie—Georgie.'

Then her tears rained down, falling copiously after a long period of drought, percolating swiftly to his arid tissues, softening them, melting the iron in his heart, washing away the rage and fury.

Presently, as her grip weakened, he raised his head and kissed her. It became his turn to comfort and console. He had not done so since his father's death.

She had conquered.

CHAPTER XVIII.

READJUSTMENT.

I.

OCTOBER comes a-tiptoe to Spragge's Canyon, bringing with it graces and benedictions instead of equinoctial gales. The strong trade wind ceases to blow; the fogs, so frequent in summer, rest upon the ocean rather than the land. The pastures are grey and brown during the day, but in the early morning and late evening they shine and shimmer with all the tints of the opal, giving promise of the blazing colours which the rains duly bring forth. It is holiday-time for ranchers who are not dairymen. The crops have been harvested; the ground is too hard to plough; the berry season is over; the cattle have been sold.

George loved the fall of the year, because he could spend long hours in the hills shooting quail, or on the rocks below the condor's eyrie, fishing for cod and pompano, or hidden in the tall *tules* waiting for the mallard and canvas-back ducks.

He had passed through August and September alone with his mother, for Samantha was away, visiting a maternal uncle in San

Clemente. She wished to go, and Mrs. Spragge was too wise to protest, although the work of the house fell upon her. She may have hoped that George would have missed Samantha, but he did not say so. Indeed, he said little, going about his work in silence, rarely seen in Aguila, giving undivided energies to building a dam for the irrigating of the land below the bridge.

Hazel married Wilbur at the end of September. The event was paragraphed in the *San Lorenzo Tribune*, with an editorial comment, reminding readers of the paper that Miss Goodrich had been bitten by a rattlesnake in Spragge's Canyon. George read that paragraph after supper one evening, and later, smoking his pipe while Mrs. Spragge sewed, he said abruptly :

'When is Samantha coming home ?'

'Do you want her to come home, George ?'

'Why not ?' he asked, with slight irritation.

'Mebbe she's happier in San Clemente.'

'Does she write that to you, Maw ?'

'No.'

'This is her home ?'

Mrs. Spragge went on sewing. George refilled his pipe, staring at his mother, who was looking older and greyer.

'If she don't come home,' he said curtly, 'I reckon I must engage a hired girl.'

'No hired help fer me,' said his mother.

'Then Samantha must come back. You write her.'

'I hev.'

'What she say ?'

'She ain't answered my letter.'

'You go fetch her.'

'She'll come back when she's good an' ready.'

'The house seems lonesome without her.'

Mrs. Spragge looked up sharply.

'Am I ter tell the child that ?'

'Yes ; you kin tell her I said so.'

Nothing more passed between them.

II.

Samantha, however, remained in San Clemente, and daily George waxed more impatient at her absence. His mother could not guess what was in his heart. The question—would he marry

Samantha—engrossed her thoughts; she lay awake hoping and praying that things would come just right; she yearned more than ever for the touch of little hands; sometimes, when the sun was declining and the long shadows stole across the hills, she could hear once again the patter of tiny feet, the joyous laughter of children, the artless prattle which often, as a young woman, she had silenced too imperatively, with a gesture or a word. And then, if she happened to be alone, and she was much alone, her knitting or sewing would drop from her tired hands, and she would sit gazing into a future which would be cold and dark as the grave if her dreams did not come true.

She knew that George was suffering. Night after night he would pace up and down his room, treading softly, so as not to awake her; and his vigils left their mark upon her face.

She dared not speak of Hazel.

One morning, he said abruptly:

'Look ye here, Maw, you go fetch Samantha. You need her.'

'What you mean, George?'

Then she had a glimpse. He shuffled uneasily; a frown formed itself between his blue eyes; he was unable to meet her placid glance. Obviously he did not know quite what he did mean. In her slow drawing tones, she said with emphasis:

'It's like this, my son. Samantha may hev found in San Clemente what we can't give a young an' healthy woman.'

'Found—what?'

'A mate.'

George's face became as inscrutable as her own. She continued:

'Samantha ain't a fool. Her head is level. She ain't got any high-falutin' ideas. I reckon she knows that God A'mighty meant her to be the mother o' strong, happy children. And any man, as is a man, lookin' into her heart'd know that it was so. She sot her mind on you, my son, an' it must hev bin gall an' worm-wood when she found out that ye'd no use fer her. Wal—that's back talk. Before she left Spragge's Canyon, I tole her what I felt about it. I sez straight: "Samanthy, George ain't the only clam on yer beach."'

'You said that?'

'I did. I've seen a sight o' women eatin' out their hearts, growin' old an' ugly an' cross, because they was fools enough ter b'lieve thar was only one man in the hull wide world fer them. I'd be mis'able if Samantha thought that a way. Yas, it's more'n

likely that the child stays on in San Clemente because Mr. Right is thar, an' Mr. Wrong is here.'

'Mebbe,' said George quietly. 'All the same, Mother, you go see. Stay over a day or two. I'll bach it.'

'Go yerself, George.'

'No.'

He went out of the room. Mrs. Spragge allowed herself to smile. But soon the smile faded, and an anxious expression replaced it. George—how could she doubt it?—wanted to experiment. He was not sure of himself. Such an experiment might be disastrous for Samantha, cruelly unfair to her.

Nevertheless, after another week had drifted by, she went to San Clemente.

Samantha returned with her.

III.

There had been no misunderstandings between them. Bluntly, Mrs. Spragge told the precise truth.

'I want ye, child. I miss ye sorely. Yer my own daughter, an' you know it. I'd give my right hand ter be able ter say, honest, that George wanted you. He may. I dunno'. He's taken things hard. He's that kind, and I wouldn't hev him different. I've a notion that the boy don't rightly know his own mind, but he misses you around the house 'most as much as I do. Wal—ther' it is.'

'I'll come home,' said Samantha softly.

Her blooming appearance astonished and distressed George. She had 'fined down.' She was wearing more becoming clothes. She had almost an urban air. She slid into her accustomed place so easily, so smilingly, that George was constrained to make invidious comparisons between her mental condition and his own.

To her son Mrs. Spragge remarked casually:

'Samanthy's folks hated to let her go. I hope she won't find it dull after that gay little town.'

'Pshaw!' exclaimed George.

The old life began again with the welcome rains. George ploughed and harrowed and cultivated from dawn till sunset. Samantha went back to her cows and pigs and poultry.

Winter came, hardly recognisable in this land of perpetual spring, where the live-oak and the chaparral remain eternally

green. The nights, not the days, grew cold. In the open fireplace of the parlour logs smouldered till George piled on the fire-cones. After supper, they would sit facing the hearth, talking over the incidents of the day, planning for the morrow. Such talk had seemed to Hazel confoundingly dull. It was never dull to the Spragges. It strayed hither and thither, seldom leaving the Canyon; it halted perpetually, even as a creek may vanish to reappear, bubbling joyously, farther down its appointed channel. But an observer shrewder than Hazel would have remarked that the talk, however desultory, indicated purpose and design; it betrayed artlessly the aim of each speaker, the desire and determination to profit by past mistakes, to reap the harvest which springs from ever-recurring blunders quickly recognised as such, to try, with incredible patience, new methods likely perhaps to fail in their turn, and—above all—the overpowering necessity of adapting means to ends, of making bricks without straw, of developing all the resources of a tiny world without seeking aid from outside.

This is the vital principle of the West, or of any new country. The civilisation built upon such laborious endeavour stands upon solid rock. In fine, the talk which Hazel despised, the memory for trivial details, the endless repetitions, constitute in their sum a Declaration of Independence, the Charter of the Pioneer.

Thus the winter passed.

IV.

Spring crept into the hills and valleys. The yellow poppies flamed upon the wind-swept pastures.

‘On hills and plains,
Lifting, exultant, every kingly cup
Brimmed with the golden vintage of the sun.’

Beneath stainless skies, glittering gloriously, the carpet of California spread itself, bordered by lupine and nemophila, delicately interwoven with gillias and violets. Upon it walked George and Samantha.

Spring had kissed her into fresher and sweeter beauty. Youth glowed again in his eyes.

They were alone in the back pasture.

Till that moment, Samantha had no reason to suppose that George's affection for her was other than fraternal. She had

marked, of course, the change in his face, the elimination of lines drawn by suffering and insomnia. His laugh rang out spontaneously, but with him she was ever conscious of Hazel standing like a pale spirit between them.

They sat down.

She began to pick the poppies. George stared at the ocean. His own world lay beneath him. The Pacific, in a vague sense, stood for what was beyond the Canyon, the unknown, unexplored element, immense, variable, treacherous. The peaks of the Coast Range affected him in the same unformulated fashion. Beyond them, as he knew, groaned and travailed a mighty nation. He remembered some of Hazel's phrases which she had used with telling effect, the 'get up and get there' gospel. Furtively he glanced at Samantha, wondering at her placidity, watching the gentle rise and fall of her bosom, marking her strong capable hands, the rich colour on her cheeks, the soft, brooding eyes. Then he said abruptly :

'Hazel wanted me to leave the Canyon.'

Samantha was startled ; sharply she drew in her breath.

'Yes ; I know.'

'She said it was too small fer me. Her notion was that a man like me, big an' strong, ought ter cut a wider swath. What do you think about that, Samanthy ?'

He did not look at her ; he was gazing at the house below, at the reek of smoke curling from the kitchen chimney.

She did not answer for at least half a minute, selecting her words out of a limited vocabulary. George, she reflected, had never demanded her opinion upon matters of importance. It filled her with pride that he should do so.

Very slowly she spoke :

'My jedgment ain't wuth much, George.'

'I'll tell ye this, Samanthy ; put it away fer keeps. Yer jedgment counts considerable with me.' It always did count ; but it counts more to-day than ever. You say out what's in yer mind. An' take yer own time ; ye needn't to hurry.'

'My jedgment, George, is agen Hazel's. She wasted good time thinkin' out what you'd ought ter do, an' you was *doin'* jest what she'd ought ter hev bin thinkin'. That's how I figured it out then, an' I've not changed my mind any. An' it takes a big strong man ter do a small job right. Ther's too many small men *doin'* the big jobs wrong. I figured that out in San Clemente. To my

mind yer cuttin' a wider swath here in the Canyon than ye could anywheres else. An' if you went away, it seems to me that ye might leave the best part o' yerself behind.'

'Thunder! That's how I feel. Say, would you hate to leave the Canyon?'

She hesitated, blushing.

'I—I got mighty homesick in San Clemente.'

He seized her hand, gripping it.

'I want you to stay in the Canyon, Samantha, with me. I—I want you to be my wife.'

She averted her face. He saw that she was moved and distressed. Her voice quavered oddly:

'Lemme stand up, George!'

He released her, rising when she did. They confronted each other. A sickening doubt assailed him. Had she ceased to love him? He exclaimed passionately:

'I ain't lost ye, hev I? Hazel's dead ter me, Samantha, but yer alive, an' I want you to live yer life with me, an' to help me live mine, hers whar we both belong.'

She murmured gaspingly:

'Wait. You tole me onct I was the goods.'

'By thunder, you air.'

'I ain't. I'm a wicked girl. I come mighty near lettin' Hazel die.'

He was utterly confounded, remembering what Hazel had said, and remembering also his reply.

'I don't believe it.'

'It's true. I didn't go to her when I heard her scream. I stood watchin' her when she lay all of a heap in the hall-way. I hate ter tell it, but I must. Ther was black murder in my heart.'

Her tone carried conviction. George thrust out his chin, staring keenly into her eyes. Then he said sharply:

'I meant ter kill that Stocker.'

'Oh, George, I was scairt to death you would.'

'Was you? Did you love me the less fer that?'

'I dunno' as I did.'

'If I had killed him, an' if I'd got off, would you hev turned from me?'

'I dunno' as I would.'

'You air the goods! I feel mean an' small beside ye. You saved Hazel, an', by God! ye've saved—me. I want you now

harder'n I ever wanted her. I'm mad fer ye, Samantha. Ther ain't a bit o' my body or soul that ain't yours. An' I want all of you.'

'It ain't pity?'

'Pity!' He seized her hand, and thrust it against his heart, which was throbbing furiously. She looked up into his eager eyes, and smiled.

'No,' she said softly. 'It ain't pity.'

They gazed at each other hungrily. George laughed, and his laugh was good to hear.

'One more. If, to-night, I took my gun, an' robbed a stage, would you chuck me?'

'George, yer jokin'?''

'I'm dead serious. I want ter know. If I stole cattle an' horses would you chuck me? No flimflammin'! You answer!'

'If you wanted me, I should want you.'

'Gee! Ain't you—great! Now, stan' still. You seen me kiss another girl not fit to black yer shoes. I'm goin' ter kiss you twice as hard, an' ten times as long. Air you ready?'

'Yes.'

Thus was a cruel memory effaced, adequately. But when George asked her to sit down, Samantha protested.

'Ain't ther somethin' to do first?'

'What?'

'You guess. I'd love you to guess.'

Did he guess? Or did she help him? Her soft eyes wandered to the house below.

George exclaimed triumphantly.

'I've got it. Tell Maw.'

Hand in hand, like a couple of children, they ran down the golden slopes.

V.

Mrs. Spragge was not in the house, nor about the chicken-coral. George called her. Only the echo of his great voice returned to him.

'She's on the hill,' said Samantha. 'Let's go quietly.'

They found her in the tiny graveyard. She did not hear them approach. Samantha touched George's arm. They stood still. Mrs. Spragge was sitting near the graves, not looking at them,

but staring across the ocean. She was proud of her long sight, although she needed spectacles to see clearly objects close at hand.

'Shush—h—h!' murmured Samantha, afraid of startling her.

Mrs. Spragge's hands lay idle upon her ample lap. Although she sat upright, still a strong, healthy woman, with many years of life ahead, her attitude indicated submission, not quite in keeping with an active dominant personality.

She was computing gains and losses. Such retrospection is rare with men and women who work hard for others. Mrs. Spragge had always worked hard, taking pride in her work because it was done thoroughly. But the time was at hand when she would have to do less and think more. Joints were stiffening; fingers were losing their dexterity; a long day's washing tired her grievously.

Soon she must become a looker-on.

What would there be to look at?

Sorrowfully, she was endeavouring to resign herself to the abandonment of hope, to her inability to impose her will upon others. George and Samantha were dear children; she was fortunate indeed in such a possession, but they would remain brother and sister.

Her common sense revolted against the enforced celibacy of a man and woman so fitted to come together. What ailed them? How often she had asked that question!

Spring saddened her. Familiar sights and sounds exasperated a woman who had never, perhaps, realised how sensitive she was to them. A clucking hen, bustlingly proclaiming the laying of a first egg, pecked at her nerves. The buds on the rose-bushes, the colours on the hills, the music of the tumid creek, became insistent, overpowering.

She gazed across the ocean.

Within half a mile of her a great steamer was speeding south. The smoke poured black from the funnels; then it became grey; finally it dissolved into the blue.

Mrs. Spragge sighed. Her black humours would dissolve also. She was foolish to sit idly here, with folded hands, speculating upon the future. She could go on working till she dropped.

Her eyes followed the steamer till it became a faint blur upon the far horizon. Thinking of the men and women on board, the heterogeneous crowd travelling to strange lands and new activities, her mind focussed itself upon Spragge's Canyon. She rejoiced

because she was not in the steamer. After all, that had been her immense good fortune. She had helped to make a home ; in that home she would die when her time came. That, at least, seemed certain. George would dig her grave, and she would lie down beside her husband and children—and rest.

Everything else, the issues beyond a mother's control, lay with God.

She rose stiffly, not turning her head, looking at the largest of the five green mounds. Church-going is not a synonym for religion with those who dwell in the wilderness. Mrs. Bungard sincerely believed Mrs. Spragge to be a pagan, because on the rare occasions when ministers of the gospel came to Aguila the Spragges remained in their Canyon. And yet, in the profoundest sense she was a religious woman, if religion, apart from dogma, may be defined as the recognition of a divine force permeating life, and exacting from life loyalty and reverence.

She knelt down, praying for strength to bear her burdens patiently.

When she got up from her knees she beheld the lovers silently awaiting her.

THE END.

